



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF
THE COMMISSION: STATISTICS**

(Agenda item 2 (h))

Draft report

1. The Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Statistics on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/13). Some delegations noted that the inaugural session of the re-established Committee on Statistics had been particularly successful in terms of attendance, substantive outcomes and organization. The Commission expressed general support for the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Statistics at its first session and requested the secretariat to consider implementing the recommendations in the context of the current and future programmes of work of the secretariat.

2. Emphasizing the importance of official statistics for development, some delegations requested that the secretariat continue providing technical assistance in statistics to developing countries of the region. The delegation of China reconfirmed that its country would be contributing \$4 million over a period of five years, through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, for a South-South cooperation programme of statistical capacity-building in China and other developing economies of the region. That was in addition to its annual \$40,000 contribution to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

3. One delegation recommended that ESCAP act as a repository of initiatives taken by member States on measuring the progress of societies. However, it emphasized that the secretariat should not become a regional focal point for the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies. Regarding producing population estimates and improving vital statistics, the delegation suggested that, before the vital registration system could be further improved, an alternative successful approach based on sample registration methods should be considered. The same delegation offered to share its country's experience in that regard with other countries.

4. The secretariat informed the Commission that the intersessional Bureau of the Committee on Statistics had begun its work pursuant to its terms of reference adopted by the Committee at its first session. The Bureau had decided to follow up on the

recommendations by, for example, elaborating procedures for the election of future Bureau members; setting up a technical advisory group; developing a regional programme to improve vital statistics; and organizing a regional forum for health authorities, Registrars General and national statisticians.

5. The Commission recognized the unique and important role that SIAP played in the development of statistical capacity in the region by providing practical training in official statistics. One delegation requested that the secretariat increase its statistical technical cooperation efforts in the Pacific region. Noting that many countries of the region had not improved their statistical systems to a satisfactory level, the representative of Japan stressed the need for SIAP to strengthen its training activities. He urged other members and associate members to implement the SIAP-related recommendations of the first session of the Committee on Statistics and to increase their sense of ownership of the Institute to ensure the maintenance of the institutional framework and training operations. One delegation stressed the importance of the training needs assessment and requested that the questionnaire be sent directly to the national statistical offices for timely completion and return.

6. One delegation stressed the benefits of wider networking among national training institutes and SIAP in designing statistical training modules. Two other delegations recommended that ESCAP, and SIAP in particular, should strengthen its cooperation with subregional organizations engaged in statistical capacity-building, for example, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States. One delegation suggested that ESCAP should further cooperate with ECO member countries in statistical training and knowledge-sharing.

7. The representative of India informed the Commission that its national statistical training institute, the National Academy of Statistical Administration, was already supporting training in official statistics in the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and selected African countries and was prepared to collaborate with other statistical training institutes, including SIAP. One delegation suggested that it would be cost-effective for SIAP to organize more subregional training programmes in collaboration with national training institutes.

8. Some delegations stressed the importance of sharing statistical information, including information to serve the functioning of other ESCAP committees. One of those delegations suggested that, as a first step, a list of statistical information collected by member countries should be compiled and categorized. Another delegation suggested that ESCAP should give priority to summarizing and analysing the statistical information from the region.