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## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-second session

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Item 3 (l) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for discussion and decision: household surveys**

## Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2020/211 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys. It provides a summary of recent developments of the Intersecretariat Working Group, including its revised terms of reference and new members from eight national statistical offices and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The report also presents a summary of activities undertaken and outputs produced by the Group in three areas: coordination, methodological development, and advocacy and communication. Lastly, the report presents an outline for consultation of a collective vision shared by the members of the Working Group on the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) “new normal” for household surveys and outlines the principles for its future programme of work.

The Commission is invited to (a) endorse the revised terms of reference of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys; (b) review the progress of work of the Working Group and provide guidance on its activities and outputs; and (c) provide guidance on further consultation on the proposed “Collective vision of the new normal for household surveys” and the principles for future work programme of the Working Group.

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\* [E/CN.3/2021/1](#).



## I. Introduction

1. At the forty-sixth session, in 2015, the Statistical Commission in its decision 46/105, endorsed the establishment of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, under the aegis of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to foster the coordination and harmonization of household survey activities.

2. The present report presents a summary of recent developments of the Intersecretariat Working Group, its revised terms of reference and the list of newly joined members from eight national statistical offices. The report also presents a summary of activities undertaken and outputs produced by the Group in three areas: coordination, methodological development, and advocacy and communication. Lastly, the report introduces an annotated outline for consultation on a document on a collective vision proposed by the Working Group on the post-COVID “new normal” for household surveys and the principles for future work programme of the Working Group.

## II. Revised terms of reference and new members

3. Shortly after the establishment of the Working Group, in 2016, the draft terms of reference were presented to the Statistical Commission.<sup>1</sup> The draft terms of reference specified the objectives and the governance structure for the Working Group. While the key objective to foster improvement in the scope and quality of social and economic statistics remains relevant, at its fifty-first session, the Statistical Commission requested the group to focus on countries’ priorities and to include representatives of national statistical offices in its membership.<sup>2</sup> In response to that request, the Working Group revised its terms of reference (see annex I) to expand its membership to Member States. The revision also included: clear terms on membership and governance structure, protocols for establishing task forces, the review process and submission of the Working Group’s outputs to the Statistical Commission.

4. As of August 2020, eight national statistical offices, namely those of Colombia, Ghana, India, Malaysia, the Niger, Samoa, the State of Palestine and Sweden, have joined the Working Group to contribute to priority-setting and provide their technical expertise to the work of the Working Group. Given the essential role of the Working Group in helping to achieve the full potential of household surveys towards Sustainable Development Goal monitoring,<sup>3</sup> the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators was consulted for the selection of members from Member States, while ensuring equitable regional representation, including members of least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was also recently added as a member, given its interest in establishing a household survey programme for refugee measurement. The list of Working Group members is available in annex II to the present report.

5. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys also welcomed its new co-chairs in April 2020, following an election held by the Steering Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> See E/CN.3/2016/21.

<sup>2</sup> See E/CN.3/2020/37, decision 51/102.

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, “Achieving the Full Potential of Household Surveys in the SDG Era”, background paper, available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/BG-Item4c-ISWGHs-E.pdf>.

The incumbent co-chairs of Working Group are the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Bank.

6. To strengthen the Secretariat and facilitate the delivery of the Working Group's workplan, a full-time coordinator was brought on board in September 2019, through generous financial contributions from member agencies. Members have since made a second round of contributions to support the position for 2021.

### III. Work accomplished and ongoing activities

7. The work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys is carried out through task forces that are organized around three major pillars: (a) coordination; (b) methodological development; and (c) advocacy and communication.

#### A. Coordination

8. Lack of coordination of international support and unpredictable funding of a short-lived and ad hoc nature have been identified among the key challenges of household surveys.<sup>4</sup> Failing to address these challenges leads to inefficient use of the resources for data collection in a country. With the objective of fostering the coordination of household survey operations, two task forces were established, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Statistics Division respectively:

*Task force on collecting information on retrospective and prospective national and international household surveys*

9. The objective of the stocktaking exercise is to foster a better understanding of gaps in national household surveys and encourage the coordination of future survey activities, as a first step towards better coordination of household surveys. The task force will define the plan and scope of the stocktaking exercise, in collaboration with the International Household Survey Network. Once these are approved, the stocktaking exercise will be carried out regularly by the Working Group.

*Task force on developing recommendations on a comprehensive national household survey programme*

10. While the ultimate objective of the Working Group is to promote a comprehensive and coordinated national household survey programme that is practical and efficient in all countries, it is also recognized that national data needs may vary across countries, as may the levels of statistical development and availability of other data sources that can fill the data gaps. In this context, this task force is carrying out a review and analysis of the national household survey programmes in selected countries and will draw conclusions on the practicalities involved and generate recommendations on key elements for countries to move towards a comprehensive national household survey programme.

#### B. Methodological development

*Thematic methodological work*

11. A number of thematic task forces were created by the Working Group, including:

<sup>4</sup> See [E/CN.3/2015/10](#).

- *Standards for education spending estimates based on household survey data*, led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics and the World Bank. This task force has completed its work, and two methodological publications were produced.<sup>5</sup>
- *Measuring food consumption in household surveys*, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank. This task force has completed its work, and one methodological publication was produced.<sup>6</sup>
- *Development and testing of a survey module on SDG 16 indicators for inclusion in ongoing household surveys*, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. A draft questionnaire module and accompanying relevant survey guidelines have been developed, and the questionnaire module is currently being tested.<sup>7</sup>
- *Promotion of consistent measurement of paid and unpaid work activities*, led by ILO. In line with the latest standards and good practices, a set of guidance and tools have been produced to support countries in implementing household surveys to measure work-related issues.<sup>8</sup>

12. At its forty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission welcomed the methodological work of the Working Group and requested that the Working Group develop modules that countries can integrate into existing surveys and provide guidance with a cross-cutting approach in its workplan.<sup>9</sup> As a result, a number of cross-cutting task forces were created.

*Task force on standards and best practices for survey data documentation*

13. Good survey data documentation not only makes such data more accessible to users, but also is essential for a harmonized household survey programme. Aimed at improving the quality and availability of survey metadata generated and published by national, regional and international organizations, this task force, led by the World Bank, will formulate recommendations on survey data documentation standards and best practices and propose a common, structured framework to organize the content, presentation, transfer and preservation of metadata. A draft report will be available in March 2021.

*Task force on dissemination of household survey microdata*

14. The value of household surveys increases with the dissemination of microdata. Despite the availability of various tools and manuals on microdata dissemination, microdata from household surveys are not always disseminated or disseminated following recommended practices. The task force, led by FAO, Open Data Watch and the World Bank, has produced a draft report providing an overview of state-of-the-art microdata dissemination in countries, comparing the prevailing practices with the

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Availability and reliability of education finance data in household surveys”, available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262804>; and World Bank, “Measuring household expenditure on education: a guidebook for designing household survey questionnaires”, available at <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/measuring-household-expenditure-education-2018-en.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank, “Food data collection in household consumption and expenditure surveys”, available at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA1561EN/ca1561en.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> More information is available at <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/documents/sdg-16-module-update-feb-2020-web.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> More information is available at <https://ilo.org/lfsresources/>.

<sup>9</sup> See E/CN.3/2018/37, decision 49/106.

recommended practices.<sup>10</sup> The task force will further identify challenges due to the changing data ecosystem and set an agenda for future research and international efforts to promote microdata dissemination.<sup>11</sup>

*Task force on spatial anonymization in public-use household survey datasets*

15. To maximize the analytical usefulness of confidential location data collected with surveys, it is key to ensure the confidentiality of respondents. The Demographic and Health Survey Programme and the World Bank co-led the work on spatial anonymization for survey data providers in defining an informed dissemination strategy that incorporates a certain level of location information. A methodological publication was completed following a peer-review process and is available as a background document for the Commission.

*Task force on supporting Sustainable Development Goal monitoring*

16. Household surveys are a critical source of data for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for monitoring progress towards the SDGs. A mapping exercise carried out by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys showed that data for approximately one third of the SDG indicators can be derived from household surveys.<sup>12</sup> The mapping exercise sets a solid foundation for countries to plan household surveys efficiently to meet the needs of SDG monitoring. The Working Group is continuing its efforts to support SDG monitoring, through the following activities, which provide hands-on toolkits and practical examples and make materials available to users.

*Leaving no one behind – sampling vulnerable populations:* In collaboration with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, Working Group is producing a set of guidance notes on sampling for household surveys to help countries in producing more disaggregated survey data for vulnerable population groups. The guidance notes focus specifically on sampling vulnerable population groups that were identified by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that is, those disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location; and those that were prioritized by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group in its consultations with major groups and international organizations with expertise in the disaggregation areas.<sup>13</sup>

*A toolkit on small area estimation for the Sustainable Development Goals:* Small area estimation techniques have been proved to be very useful to provide reliable disaggregated data for some SDG indicators, including those related to poverty, food insecurity and undernutrition, health and the unemployment rate. Using small area estimation methods to improve SDG data availability for vulnerable population groups is one of the priority areas of work for the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the Working Group. A toolkit on small area estimation for SDGs will be produced to offer practical guidance and country case studies.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/task-forces-round2/>.

<sup>11</sup> The terms of reference of the task force are available at <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/documents/TOR-microdata-dissemination-task-force-2020-final.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> The mapping exercise was presented to the fiftieth session of the Statistical Commission as a background document under agenda item 4 (c). See [E/CN.3/2019/25](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/).

<sup>13</sup> Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, “Data disaggregation and SDG indicators: policy priorities and current and future disaggregation plans”, background paper, available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/BG-Item3a-Data-Disaggregation-E.pdf>.

*Better utilization of existing household surveys for more disaggregated gender statistics: a global toolkit:* A global toolkit has been produced, through efforts led by UN-Women, consisting in a collection of good practices and lessons learned from eight country studies. It covers five key statistical processes supporting the better utilization of existing household surveys in order to enhance the quantity and quality of gender statistics: (a) strengthening the commitment of national statistical system leadership and establishing coordination mechanisms; (b) identifying national priority gender equality indicators; (c) developing methodologies and producing statistics on select national priority gender equality indicators; (d) validating the estimates generated; and (e) disseminating, advocating and using the disaggregated gender statistics produced. The executive summary is available as a background document for the Commission; the global toolkit is to be launched in the Women Count data hub<sup>14</sup>, on the margins of the fifty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

*Develop and provide access to inventory of guidance materials for household survey-based Sustainable Development Goal indicators:* The Working Group is revamping its website to serve as a key entry point for countries to access metadata and related survey methodologies for all household survey relevant SDG indicators. This will help ensure broader outreach of the training and guidance materials on household surveys produced by Working Group and its members; and facilitate access to methodologies associated with SDG indicators that can be collected through household surveys.

*Task Force on “COVID-19 and household surveys”*

17. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a major challenge for household survey programmes. Traditional face-to-face survey operations have been halted fully or partially for many national statistical offices. Led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics, the Statistics Division and the World Bank, a task force on COVID-19 was created to enhance coordination and improve efficiencies in the current data collection system; to promote and disseminate best practices and lessons learned; and to lead strategic thinking in preparing and adjusting to a post-pandemic “new normal”.<sup>15</sup>

18. Under the task force, a web portal<sup>16</sup> was made available starting in June 2020, updated on a bi-weekly basis, with details of COVID-19 impact surveys such as the objectives of the surveys, focal points and contact information for the survey implementation organizations and survey designs. The portal, with information on more than 500 surveys supported by Working Group members for 180 countries, aims to support the coordination of the COVID-19 impact surveys within countries.

19. The task force also compiled guidance produced by Working Group members, both on maintaining the continuity of regular survey programmes and on carrying out surveys to measure the impact of COVID-19. Webinars covering various topics related to COVID-19 and household surveys were organized by the COVID-19 task force, in collaboration with the statistics divisions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

<sup>14</sup> The global toolkit on better utilization of existing household surveys for more disaggregated gender statistics is available on the Women Count data hub: [www.data.unwomen.org/women-count](http://www.data.unwomen.org/women-count).

<sup>15</sup> The terms of reference for the task force are available at: <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/documents/ToR-COVID-TF-Final.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/covid-19-and-household-surveys/>.

20. As countries are gradually reopening following lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a resumption in household survey operations, either through partial or full face-to-face interviews by national statistical offices. In response to a call by countries during the third round of the Statistics Division and World Bank survey on the impact of COVID-19 on national statistical offices,<sup>17</sup> the task force produced a guidance note on planning and implementing household surveys under COVID-19, focusing on considerations to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during survey field work and to maintain, to the extent possible, continuity in household survey operations.<sup>18</sup>

21. Lastly, while national statistical offices are slowly re-opening and resuming their survey operations, COVID-19 is likely to lead national household survey programmes to a post-pandemic “new normal”. How can countries take this opportunity to establish a sustainable household survey programme that is resilient and versatile to future shocks like COVID-19? To address this question, the COVID-19 task force is working to draft a vision paper to help countries prepare for this new scenario in which face-to-face surveys will have to evolve and adjust to meet the challenges posed by the “new normal”. Details about the paper are in section IV below.

### **C. Advocacy and communication**

22. To advocate for its work on household surveys, the Intersecretariat Working Group organized or contributed to various events, including a session during the 2020 virtual United Nations World Data Forum, entitled “The COVID-19 crisis: is the household survey at a crossroads?” and the Friday seminar entitled “Household Surveys in a Changing Landscape” during the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission.<sup>19</sup> The Working Group is also actively engaging with partners from academia, civil society and national statistical offices through its various task forces.

23. To broaden the outreach of its work, the Working Group has enhanced the functionality of its website as an online training repository and is broadening its outreach and fostering interest in its work. The Working Group also set its short- and long-term communication strategies, to advocate for household surveys as a key tool for social and economic data and for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure the work carried out by the Working Group is communicated well with all potential audiences.

## **IV. Towards a collective vision of the “new normal” for household surveys**

24. Under the COVID-19 task force, a vision paper is being prepared by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys on the “new normal” of household surveys. The paper covers key elements for a sustainable household survey programme: cost-effective, well-integrated, fit-for-purpose and resilient to shocks such as COVID-19. The paper argues that household surveys should be considered an integral part of a larger data ecosystem within the country. Therefore the role of

<sup>17</sup> Information obtained through the Statistics Division and the World Bank survey on the impact of COVID-19 on national statistical offices, round 3, October 2020. Among countries that do not already have new survey protocols under COVID-19, approximately 75 per cent have indicated the need for such guidance.

<sup>18</sup> Available as a background document.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/side-events/20200228-1M-friday-seminar-on-emerging-issues/>.

household surveys should be considered in relation to other sources within the data ecosystem: a primary source to collect data that cannot be covered by other data sources; a complementary source to fill gaps in population coverage and measurement within the data ecosystem; and a validation source to provide insights on the quality of other data sources. The paper outlines steps that national statistical offices could take to move towards the “new normal”:

(a) Improve the integration of household surveys with other data sources, including by improving the interoperability of the different data sets. Data integration can improve the timeliness and granularity of survey data, and through data integration, household surveys can also help to address quality issues in other data sources, thus improving the quality of overall estimates;

(b) Build stronger and smarter survey infrastructure for computer-assisted web interviewing, computer-assisted telephone interviewing, computer-assisted personal interview and mix-mode surveys, to improve resilience of household survey programmes. This includes building viable sampling frames for various data collection modes and developing the accompanying survey tools and protocols such as establishing call centres for computer-assisted telephone interviewing or secure web-based tools for computer-assisted web interviewing surveys, designing mode-specific questionnaires and delivering training and technical assistance onsite or remotely;

(c) Emphasize the entire data production and dissemination cycle and strengthen the dissemination of microdata and metadata from household surveys, while strictly guarding the privacy of individuals. This practice helps leverage the full analytical potential of collected data and maximize the return on investing in household surveys;

(d) Build an enabling environment for household surveys through various means such as (i) engaging with relevant stakeholders at all stages of household survey operations; (ii) communicating the value of household surveys to policymakers and the general public; (iii) organizing rigorous training programmes for staff on all relevant topics, including survey data collection, compilation and dissemination, data integration, new data sources and innovative methods; (iv) investing in information and communications technology infrastructure for survey data collection, storage, integration and dissemination; and (v) advocating for better financing of household survey programmes as an integral part of a national data ecosystem;

(e) Invest in innovative approaches to improve the efficiency and accuracy of traditional survey data collection, processing and analysis. Digital tracing data and sensor data can also be used to improve the accuracy of measurement for a part of survey data collection and improve the overall efficiency of surveys.

## **V. Principles for future work programme**

25. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys will continue its work along three components: coordination, methodological development, and advocacy and communication. Work carried out under the Working Group will follow these principles:

(a) Setting priorities that are guided by countries. The Working Group will enhance its engagement with national statistical offices and ensure its work is aligned with national priorities and guided by countries’ needs and best practices at the national level;



(b) Focusing on innovative topics for its methodological work, following the ideas being outlined in the document entitled “Towards a collective vision on the household survey ‘new normal’”, as covered in section IV. The Working Group will also encourage and support experimentation with innovative approaches to establish systematic empirical evidence within countries;

(c) Promoting the exchange of experiences and supporting the scaling-up of innovative survey methods in countries;

(d) Broadening outreach and collaboration with partners, including national statistical offices, civil society and academia, and with other data communities such as those dealing with administrative data, geospatial data and citizen-generated data.

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

26. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To endorse the terms of reference of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys;**

(b) **To review the progress of work of the Working Group and provide guidance on its activities and outputs;**

(c) **To provide guidance on further consultation on the proposed annotated outline of the “Collective vision of the new normal for household surveys” and the principles for the future work programme of the Working Group.**

## Annex I

### Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys terms of reference, final

14 May 2020

#### I. Background

1. Household surveys are a vital component of every national statistical system. They are the main source of social and economic statistics, including many indicators crucial for developing and monitoring country policies and tracking progress towards national and global development targets and goals, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They are also widely used for research on development issues. In recent years, the demand for data from social and economic surveys has continued to grow, particularly in developing countries, where administrative systems and other data sources are the weakest and the information gaps remain the largest.

2. With the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>1</sup> the demand for household surveys has further increased; household surveys continue to be a critical source of data for the full implementation of the 2030 agenda and for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite significant improvements in data availability, in both topical and geographic coverage, and advances in methodologies, large disparities remain among countries. Some countries are still unable to sustain a long-term programme of high-quality surveys that are comparable over time and compliant with international standards.

3. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an additional problem that emerged is the insufficient coverage of Sustainable Development Goals indicators by the national household survey programme with respect to its full potential. Key challenges with respect to household surveys include the availability and frequency of household survey data, since household survey programmes are often not adequately covered and financially supported in national statistical plans; the lack of relevant and timely data; the low reliability and accuracy of household data in many low-income countries; the need for data comparability and coherence within surveys in a given country and across countries; the cost-effectiveness of household surveys; the need for adequate funds; and the accessibility and usability of the data produced through household surveys.<sup>2</sup>

4. In order to address the above-mentioned issues, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (Working Group) was established in 2015 by the Statistical Commission<sup>3</sup> to foster coordination of efforts and harmonization of standards among development partners and across countries and to promote further methodological development relevant to household surveys. In addition, at its forty-ninth session<sup>4</sup> and again in its most recent session in 2020, the Commission tasked the Working Group with developing and updating methodological guidance on household surveys with a cross-cutting focus and providing guidance on different methodological areas.

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1, annex.

<sup>2</sup> E/CN.3/2015/10.

<sup>3</sup> E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40, available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/46th-session/documents/statcom-2015-46th-report-E.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> E/CN.3/2018/37, available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/49th-session/documents/Report-on-the-49th-session-E.pdf>.

## II. Objective

5. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys is created to foster improvement in the scope and quality of social and economic statistics as delivered through national, regional and international household survey programmes, including through increased coordination and cooperation across at all levels. More specifically, the Working Group:

(a) Provides a vision for a global household survey agenda and the development of integrated household survey systems to meet the need for social and economic statistics, including for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Fosters coordination and cooperation in the planning, funding and implementation of household surveys at the national, regional and international level;

(c) Promotes the harmonization of survey methods and instruments, where appropriate;

(d) Regularly reviews and provides strategic recommendations on new methodological development and innovations related to household surveys;

(e) Fosters the production and adoption of tools and guidelines on household surveys with a cross-cutting focus, taking into account specific country and regional contexts;

(f) Supports the adoption of international statistical standards, methods and best practices, in the area of data collection, compilation, dissemination and integration of national, regional and international household survey programmes;

(g) Works closely with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to improve Sustainable Development Goal monitoring through household surveys, in particular on improving availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data for relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators;

(h) Develops partnerships and seek adequate funding and resources to support coordination at the global level as well as the development and adoption of methodological innovation and the diffusion of best practices in household surveys.

## III. Membership and governance structure

### A. Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

6. Members of the Working Group consist of international agencies and member states. Experts from academia, donors and civil society organizations are invited to join the work of the Working Group and/or the task forces on an ad hoc basis. Civil society organizations and donors may be considered for membership in the Working Group on a case-by-case basis, according the relevance of their technical and financial contribution to the work of the Working Group.

7. Agency members of the Working Group should be responsible either for a survey programme (such as multiple indicator cluster surveys, the Living Standards Measurement Study or the 50X2030 initiative) or for providing regular training and support for household surveys in areas under their mandate (including the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme).

8. Member states will join the Working Group based on their needs if: (a) their statistical systems rely significantly on household survey programmes; or (b) they can offer technical and/or financial support to the work of the Working Group. The

participation of countries will ensure equitable regional representation, including members of the least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The initial list of countries will be proposed by the Secretariat. Additional Member States might express interest in participating as observers in the larger group.

9. Proposals for new members may be made by any current members and are subject to approval by the Steering Committee. Membership in the Working Group will be based on active participation by and effective contribution of its members.

10. The Intersecretariat Working Group meets physically once a year, and otherwise conducts its work electronically through email exchanges and virtual meetings. Participation in the physical meetings is self-funded. A limited number of developing countries may receive funding, when available, to support their participation in meetings.

## **B. Steering Committee**

11. The work of the Working Group will be governed by a Steering Committee consisting of international agencies that provide regular financial and in-kind contributions to support the Working Group's work programme as well as by a core group of up to five countries (one per region).

12. The Steering Committee plans the work programme for the Working Group and oversees the work of the task forces. The Steering Committee meets regularly to discuss priorities and review work progress and keeps all members of the Group informed about important discussions and key decisions.

13. The Steering Committee elects the two co-chairs of the Working Group from among its members. The co-chairs will be elected for a rotating period of two years and are eligible for a second two-year term. In order to ensure continuity, after the first two-year period, one of the current co-chairs will rotate out.

14. The Steering Committee organizes regular virtual meetings to discuss priorities and review progress. If feasible, and requested by its members, they may also meet in-person once a year on the margins of the session of the Statistical Commission or some other major statistics event.

## **C. Secretariat**

15. The Statistics Division is the secretariat of the Working Group. It supports the work of the Working Group and works closely with the two co-chairs.

16. In addition to making technical contributions as a full member of the Group and the Steering Committee, the Secretariat is responsible for (a) maintaining the Working Group website; (b) preparing reports for the Statistical Commission; (c) facilitating communication with countries and regional and international agencies through the Statistical Commission, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System; (d) organizing and undertaking consultations with potential donors; and (e) providing logistical and other support to the Working Group.

17. As part of the secretariat, a coordinator, with expertise in the field of household surveys, provides the substantive support to the co-chairs and the group. The coordinator, under the guidance of the co-chairs, the Steering Committee and the Statistics Division, will be responsible for preparing a work programme for the Working Group, overseeing the work of the task forces and organizing the

Steering Committee and Working Group meetings. The coordinator also provides regular reports to the Working Group on work progress, problems identified, solutions recommended and decisions to be made. In addition, the coordinator supports fundraising efforts, in close consultation with the secretariat, the co-chairs and the steering group.

#### **D. Task forces**

18. Substantive work of the Working Group is carried out through task forces, which can be proposed by members of the Working Group and approved by the Steering Committee.

19. Topics of the task forces should be cross-cutting and innovative. Task forces should have clear terms of reference (see appendix for the template) and expected duration of work; and should report back to the Working Group periodically. Task forces should be led by one or multiple members of the Working Group and supported by other members of the Working Group. Task force leads may also invite experts outside of the Working Group to contribute to its work.

20. The output of the task forces is reviewed by the Working Group on a volunteer basis, approved by the Steering Committee and considered output of the Working Group, to be submitted to the Statistical Commission for approval or for information, depending on the nature of the output.

### **IV. Duration**

21. The work of the Working Group will be ongoing and renewal assessed annually. The terms of reference will be reviewed when needed and as requested by the Statistical Commission.

#### **Appendix**

##### **Terms of reference for a task Force – template**

- (a) Rationale
  - Background of the stream of work and explanation as to why the task force is being established
- (b) Objective
  - What would the task force achieve
- (c) Tasks and output:
  - Tasks to be undertaken, breakdown with timeline
  - The output to be produced
  - Review process of the output
  - Final approval process and whether it requires approval from the Statistical Commission
- (d) Membership
  - Who can join the task force
  - Responsibilities of members

## **Annex II**

### **Membership of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys**

#### **Member States**

1. Colombia
2. Ghana
3. India
4. Malaysia
5. Niger
6. Samoa
7. State of Palestine
8. Sweden

#### **International organizations**

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
  2. International Labour Organization
  3. United Nations Children's Fund
  4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics
  5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
  6. United Nations Development Programme
  7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
  8. United Nations Statistics Division (also serve as the secretariat of the Group)
  9. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)
  10. World Bank
  11. World Health Organization
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