



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Statistics

### Seventh session

Bangkok, 26–28 August 2020

Agenda item 8

### Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session

## Draft report

### I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

1. The following decisions adopted by the Committee on Statistics are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

#### Decision 1

The Committee endorses the draft monitoring and evaluation framework for the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind to advance official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, subject to the amendments suggested by member States and final review and approval by the Committee.

#### Decision 2

The Committee decides to advance the mainstreaming of gender in its work. It requests the Bureau to propose, in consultation with the secretariat and development partners, modalities to that end for review and approval by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

#### Decision 3

The Committee decides to feature accounting for integrated statistics and analysis in its future work with an emphasis on sharing country research and experiences and facilitating the provision of technical assistance. It requests the Bureau to propose, in consultation with the secretariat, modalities to that end for review and approval by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

#### Decision 4

The Committee decides to feature big data for official statistics in its future work with an emphasis on sharing country research, experiences and good practices and facilitating capacity development. It requests the Bureau to

propose, in consultation with the secretariat, modalities to that end for review and approval by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

2. The Committee held its seventh session from 26 to 28 August 2020.
3. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it was organized as a hybrid event, enabling participation physically or remotely through the KUDO platform.
4. The meeting was opened by: Ms. Wanpen Poonwong, Director General, National Statistical Office, Thailand; Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia, and Chair of the sixth session of the Committee on Statistics of ESCAP; Under-Secretary-General, United Nations, and Executive Secretary, ESCAP; Ms. Takaichi Sanae, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communication, Japan; and Mr. Yoshikai Shojiro, Director General, Policy Planning on Statistical Standards, Japan.
5. The opening session included the launch of a book capturing fifty years of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and its vision for the future in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute.

### **B. Attendance**

6. More than 200 participants registered for the event, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international organizations, civil society organizations and other entities. The list of participants is available at [www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session](http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session).
7. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkmenistan; United States of America; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.
8. Representatives of the following offices of the United Nations Secretariat attended: Economic Commission for Africa; and Statistics Division.
9. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds and entities attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Union; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Statistics Korea (KOSTAT)-United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); United Nations Children’s Fund; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Population Fund; and World Trade Organization.

10. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Association of Southeast Asian Nations secretariat; Eurostat; and Pacific Community.

11. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

### **C. Election of officers**

12. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Gogita Todradze (Georgia)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin (Malaysia) Mr. Pravin Srivastava (India) and Mrs. Indu Bandara (Sri Lanka) (sharing arrangement) Mr. Kemueli Naiqama (Fiji)
Member:	Ms. Bayanchimeg Chilkhaasuren (Mongolia)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Claire Dennis Mapa (Philippines)

### **D. Agenda**

13. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Soliciting whole-of-government support for official statistics in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
  - (a) Follow-up on decisions made at the sixth session of the Committee on Statistics;
  - (b) Monitoring progress in line with the document entitled “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community” and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind;
  - (c) Monitoring progress in response to the Get Every One in the Picture initiative on civil registration and vital statistics.

3. Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
  - (a) Progress made in support of the collective vision and framework for action by groups responsible for regional initiatives of the Committee on Statistics and by the secretariat;
  - (b) Initiatives by global, regional and subregional organizations in support of the collective vision and framework for action.
4. Seminar on priority issues:
  - (a) Accounting for integrated statistics and analysis;
  - (b) Embracing big data to modernize official statistics in Asia and the Pacific;
  - (c) Transforming human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future.
5. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
6. Reports brought to the attention of the Committee:
  - (a) Report of the Bureau;
  - (b) Reports of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;
  - (c) Report of the Thematic Working Group on Statistics of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Asia-Pacific task team on implementation of the Secretary-General's regional reform phase two recommendation for a region-by-region change management process for data and statistics.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session.

**E. Other events**

14. The following events were held as online webinars in conjunction with the Committee session:
  - (a) Conducting a census during the COVID-19 pandemic: challenges and approaches (29 June 2020);
  - (b) Human resource management to build statistical institutions (4 August 2020);
  - (c) Accounting for integrated statistics and analysis (10 August 2020);
  - (d) The prospect of big data for official statistics in Asia and the Pacific (17 August 2020);
  - (e) 50 years of statistical capacity building by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific: perspectives from alumni chief statisticians (24 August 2020).

### III. Summary of advance electronic consultations

15. The secretariat, with the guidance of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics, conducted advance consultations with members of national statistical offices in member and associate member countries in the Asia-Pacific region on agenda items 2 (b), 3 (a) and 4 (a)–(c) and on the annotated provisional agenda. These consultations were conducted electronically from 20 July to 10 August 2020. An online questionnaire was designed for each of the agenda items inviting comments on the issues for consideration or action in each of the substantive documents.

16. The objective of the consultations was to provide Committee members with the opportunity to comment on the substantive documents in advance of the formal session to facilitate interactive dialogue during the session. Additionally, its objective was to manage time during the formal session, which was reduced to three hours per day to accommodate the virtual modality in order to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants given the COVID-19 outbreak as well as on-going travel restrictions in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### A. Agenda item 1 (c) **Opening of the session: adoption of the agenda**

17. A total of six responses were received on the annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CST/2020/L.1).

#### B. Agenda item 2 (b) **Soliciting whole-of-government support for official statistics in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: monitoring progress in line with the document entitled “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community” and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind**

18. A total of 12 responses were received on the note by the secretariat entitled “Draft monitoring and evaluation framework for the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind” (ESCAP/CST/2020/1) and the conference room paper entitled “A monitoring framework and guidelines for the collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind” (ESCAP/CST/2020/CRP.1).

19. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the development of the draft monitoring and evaluation framework and made a number of suggestions for improvements to the indicators, targets and presentation.

20. The Committee welcomed the baseline report<sup>1</sup> and made a number of suggestions for future iterations.

<sup>1</sup> ESCAP/CST/2020/1, section III.

**C. Agenda item 3 (a)**  
**Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: progress made in support of the collective vision and framework for action by groups responsible for regional initiatives of the Committee on Statistics and by the secretariat**

21. A total of nine responses were received on the note by the secretariat entitled “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: progress in implementing regional initiatives with respect to the collective vision and framework for action” (ESCAP/CST/2020/2).

22. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the progress made in support of the collective vision and framework for action by groups responsible for regional initiatives of the Committee and by the secretariat, and encouraged the continuation of their efforts in a number of prioritized areas, including the modernization of national statistical systems, the enhancement of the use of new data sources such as big data and geospatial information, the development of accounts, disaster-related statistics and the use of virtual collaboration spaces. The Committee expressed appreciation for the secretariat’s efforts on gender mainstreaming and for the establishment of the data integration community of practice, and provided advice on strengthening and expanding the work. The Committee noted that the technical working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific had been newly configured and provided support for and guidance on its work. Several members of the Committee expressed interest in the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership and said that they would consider becoming members.

23. The Committee welcomed the initiative to implement the Agricultural Integrated Survey Programme on a large scale. It acknowledged the Regional Technical Advisory Board.

**D. Agenda item 4 (a)**  
**Seminar on priority issues: accounting for integrated statistics and analysis**

24. A total of 11 responses were received on the note by the secretariat on regional and national efforts with economic, satellite and environmental accounts in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CST/2020/3).

25. The Committee acknowledged the importance of accounts for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the commitments contained in the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind as well as their value for data-driven decision-making and policymaking. It noted with appreciation the increased efforts to compile accounts in the region in recent years, especially environmental and satellite accounts. It also noted that the data and sector expertise needed for accounts often went beyond the scope and capacity of national statistical offices and hence required the establishment of new partnerships and innovative collaboration arrangements.

26. The Committee recognized that regional and international collaboration on accounting and related business processes benefited national efforts and strengthened national capacities, for example through the sharing of research and experiences, technical assistance, collaborative experimentation and piloting.

**E. Agenda item 4 (b)**  
**Seminar on priority issues: embracing big data to modernize official statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

27. A total of 10 responses were received on the note by the secretariat on regional and national efforts to embrace big data for official statistics in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CST/2020/4).

28. The Committee acknowledged the importance of embracing the use of big data for official statistics and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also acknowledged the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic had given an additional impetus to the exploration of new data sources. The Committee noted with appreciation the increased efforts to experiment with new data sources and the progress that had been made in using big data for the production of official statistics in several member States. It also noted that access to big data sources and the needed legislative frameworks were key obstacles to progress in that area. It also highlighted that the techniques, methodologies and technology needed in order to take full advantage of big data sources often went beyond the capacity of national statistical offices and highlighted the important work of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics in that regard, emphasizing training needs in particular.

29. The Committee recognized that regional and international collaboration on big data benefited national efforts and strengthened national capacities, for example through the sharing of research, experiences and perspectives, collaborative experimentation, partnerships, staff exchanges and piloting.

**F. Agenda item 4 (c)**  
**Seminar on priority issues: transforming human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future**

30. A total of 10 responses were received on the note by the secretariat on regional and national efforts to transform human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future (ESCAP/CST/2020/5).

31. The Committee acknowledged the changing technological landscape in the production of statistics and the associated skill requirements, noting efforts to facilitate the acquisition of skills that were in line with new technologies; reforms to human resource management involving skills audits and the development of on-the-job training programmes to ensure that staff acquire the necessary know-how to work effectively; the establishment of statistical analyst positions across various ministries to support evidence-based policymaking; and practical training programmes focused on big data.

32. The Committee recognized the importance of regional and international collaboration with regard to the following: improving human resources management, increasing skills development efforts and strengthening training institutions; addressing issues that affect the production and use of statistics in a rapidly changing environment; expanding reach such as through e-learning, webinars and freely available materials; increasing public awareness of official statistics; and supporting training institutes in various countries and the establishment, where feasible, of regional training centres. That support could take the form of training infrastructure and policies as well as the development of training programmes to address regional skill gaps in line with the 2030 Agenda.

#### **IV. Chair's Summary**

33. The deliberations during the formal hybrid session will be summarized in the Chair's summary, which will be available within a week following the conclusion of the session and included as annex III to the present report.



## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2020/1	Draft monitoring and evaluation framework for the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind	2 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2020/2	Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: progress in implementing regional initiatives with respect to the collective vision and framework for action	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/3	Regional and national efforts with economic, satellite and environmental accounts in Asia and the Pacific	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/4	Regional and national efforts to embrace big data for official statistics in Asia and the Pacific	4 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2020/5	Regional and national efforts to transform human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future	4 (c)
ESCAP/75/21	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its fourteenth session	6 (b)
ESCAP/76/22	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its fifteenth session	6 (b)
ESCAP/76/23/Rev.1	Report of the 5th meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	2 (c)
<i>Conference room paper</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2020/CRP.1	A monitoring framework and guidelines for the collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind	2 (b)

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2020/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CST/2020/L.2	Draft report	8
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/1	Report on progress with regard to decisions made at the sixth session of the Committee on Statistics	2 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/2	Report of the secretariat on the establishment of communities of practice	2 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/3	Report on progress towards the achievement of the goals of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)	2 (c)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/4	Reports of the 8th and 9th meetings of the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/5	Report of the 2nd meeting of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/6	Report of the 6th meeting of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/7	Progress in implementing the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/8	Reports of the 4th and 5th meetings of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/9	Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: initiatives by global, regional and subregional organizations with respect to the collective vision and framework for action	3 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/10	Work of the secretariat and partners on mainstreaming gender in environment statistics	3 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/11	Preparation of the draft programme of work	5

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/12	Report on the activities of the Bureau since the sixth session of the Committee on Statistics	6 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2020/INF/13	Report of the Thematic Working Group on Statistics of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Asia-Pacific task team responsible for implementing phase two of the Secretary-General's United Nations development system regional reform	6 (c)
<i>Information available online</i>		
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session#">www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session#</a>	Information for participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session#">www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-statistics-seventh-session#</a>	Tentative programme	

## Annex II

### List of publications and webinars

#### A. Publications issued since the sixth session of the Committee<sup>1</sup>

*Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019.* ST/ESCAP/2860 (Sales No. E.19.II.F.9).

*Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2020.* ST/ESCAP/2900 (Sales No. E.20.II.F.10).

#### *Working Paper Series*\*\*

SD/WP/11: SDG14: Life below water - navigating life below water in Asia and the Pacific

SD/WP/10: Mainstreaming gender in environment statistics for the SDGs and beyond: identifying priorities in Asia and the Pacific

SD/WP/09: Every policy is connected (EPIC): a generic tool for policy-data integration

SD/WP/08: SDG16: peace, justice and strong institutions: walking through Asian and Pacific territories

#### *Stats Briefs*\*\*

Issue no. 25: Engaging with development partners to stand-up COVID-19 rapid assessment surveys: five tips for national statistics offices

Issue no. 24: Broken down by age and sex: why reliable and timely population statistics are more important than ever

Issue no. 23: Surveys under lockdown; a pandemic lesson

Issue no. 22: Ocean accounts: the icing on the cake

Issue no. 21: Communicating gender data to deliver impactful messages

Issue no. 20: Big data = big ideas - Asia and the Pacific statistical community share their experiences in Malaysia at the 62nd International Statistics Institute World Statistics Congress

Issue no. 19: Integrated statistics: a journey worthwhile

Issue no. 18: Can mobile phone data be used for official statistics? - Asia and the Pacific says yes

Issue no. 17: Dissemination and communication of vital statistics

Issue no. 16: SDG implementation - what to do when it's not clear what to do?

#### *Blog posts*\*\*

17 July 2020: "Uncounted deaths could obscure COVID-19's gendered impacts"

13 July 2020: "Collaborating across South Asia to improve civil registrations"

8 June 2020: "How much do Asia-Pacific countries invest in SDG-related priorities?"

<sup>1</sup> A double asterisk (\*\*) denotes publications that are available online only.

1 June 2020: “Is big data the solution to produce official statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic?”

18 May 2020: “5 reasons why we need to sail faster to healthy oceans”

10 April 2020: “Why we will never know how many people die from COVID-19”

26 February 2020: “CRVS: bringing joy to people’s lives”

3 July 2019: “Using data integration to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda”

10 May 2019: “Providing evidence for change in Asia and the Pacific: reflections on women in math”

2 Jan 2019: “Who are you going to call?: the SDG busters”

*Other publications*

“Reviewing the national statistical system of the Maldives 2020”

“Producing import and export price indices (XMPI) in Bhutan”

“Developing a statistical business register (SBR) in Myanmar”

“The importance of CRVS for gender equality”

*Civil Registration in South Asia: Regulations, Relationships and the Role of ICT with UNICEF*

“Information note: what is the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific?”

“Information note: inequality assessments”

*Civil Registration in South Asia: Coordination, Connections and Collaboration with UNICEF*

**B. Webinars (Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series)**

24 August 2020: “50 years of statistical capacity-building by Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific: perspectives from alumni chief statisticians”.

17 August 2020: “The prospect of big data for official statistics in Asia and the Pacific”.

10 August 2020: “Accounting for integrated statistics and analysis”.

4 August 2020: “Human resource management to build statistical institutions”.

29 July 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: Mapping land cover change using remote sensing and GIS”.

23 July 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: COVID-19 and death registration”.

13 July 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: COVID-19 data portals”.

29 June 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: Conducting a census during the COVID-19 pandemic: challenges and approaches”.

22 June 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: Asia and the Pacific CRVS systems’ responses to the COVID-19 crisis”.

8 June 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: Rapid assessment surveys on the impact of COVID-19”.

1 June 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: COVID-19 impact on the household surveys”.

27 May 2020: “Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series: Accessing and using subnational population estimates in Asia and the Pacific”.

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