

Concept Note

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1. Introduction

Members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have recognized the importance of integrating statistical planning into national development planning and that ill-informed policies could be much more expensive than investment in data and statistics. The Fourth Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) noted that statistical capacity-building and stakeholder engagement were key challenges in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, and underscored the importance of prioritizing data needs at the national level, and that collecting and managing high-quality and relevant disaggregated data remained an issue (E/ESCAP/73/31 para 24). The 73rd session of the Commission therefore endorsed the recommendation by the Fifth Committee on Statistics to convene:

“...the sixth session of the Committee, in 2018, at a higher decision-making level, given the critical importance of high-level government commitment to the successful implementation of the framework of action, to secure political, institutional and resource support and to mobilize broad-based partnership in order to achieve the collective vision of transforming national statistical systems in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹

The December 2018 Committee on Statistics is organized to attain the high-level political commitment required to support the achievement of the collective vision on “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community” and thereby support the realization of the vision of the Asia-Pacific statistical community that:

... by 2030, national statistical systems are enabled and empowered to lead development of and to deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services for urgently needed and evolving statistical requirements of Agenda 2030.

¹ E/ESCAP/73/24 Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fifth session, Recommendation 5/1

The Sixth Committee on Statistics is organized by the Statistics Division of the ESCAP Secretariat, with oversight from the bureau of the Committee on Statistics and in consultation with the members of the Committee on Statistics and the Thematic working group on statistics under the Regional Coordination Mechanism in Asia and the Pacific.

2. Objectives of the High level session of the Committee on Statistics

The session aims:

- a) to strengthen the understanding and appreciation by high-level decision-makers of the importance of statistics, the necessity of linking data and policy more strongly and hence the need to transform national statistical systems for the successful implementation of SDGs and national development goals;
- b) to identify and prioritize actions that should be taken by NSOs for the NSS to be more responsive to policy needs (timeliness, estimation, modelling, alternative data sources, new partners, new roles and responsibilities, etc)
- c) to identify and prioritize the most relevant and effective action that should be taken by Government and other stakeholders to advance official statistics and its use; and
- d) to commit to take those actions.

3. Agenda

- *Refer to current version of draft agenda*

4. Possible content of a draft outcome document

- *Refer to current version of draft outcome document*

5. Participants

Traditionally, chief statisticians (or their duly designated senior managers) have represented member states at the Committee on Statistics. That is, the Committee convenes the highest level of decision-makers within the national statistical community.

It is expected that the participants at the senior officials segment of the Committee will mainly be chief statisticians.

The High level segment of the Committee aims to expand and elevate participation beyond statistical leaders as a means of assuring whole-of-the-government commitment towards achieving the collective vision and in recognition that a number of crucial

decisions for the longer-term health and development of national statistical systems are beyond the mandate of the chief statisticians. Towards this end, the priority target audience is:

- The high level officials to which chief Statisticians report (i.e. the Minister responsible for the NSO or other relevant high level official)

In addition, deliberations will be enriched by participation from the following groups:

- key government and non-government users: to articulate their needs and, in turn, pledge to take actions to support achievement of the collective vision so that their demands can be met
- politicians (national and local): to raise their understanding and appreciation of the collective vision and get political buy-in and establish political will
- ministries of budget, finance, planning, legal affairs/justice: to secure their commitment to provide strategic, institutional and resource support
- key influencers, champions and sponsors beyond the national statistical systems: to deliver the messages to secure political commitment and to promote the ideas, mobilize support and obtain political commitment
- opinion leaders: to promote the ideas, mobilize support and obtain political commitment
- NGOs

Each member state will determine the composition of its delegation to the Committee.

In addition, the Bureau could identify global and regional opinion leaders, key influencers, champions and sponsors who would be invited to the Committee session and its preparatory events.

6. Documents

Formal meeting documents for deliberation at the High-Level Session of the Committee on Statistics include:

- I. Draft declaration to 'Navigate Policy and Data to Leave No One Behind' (agenda items 5 & 10)

ESCAP will report on its regular body of work on the following topics to support the deliberations and negotiations at the Session:

- II. Background paper on achieving the vision on Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 2a): existing regional initiatives;

- III. Background paper on achieving the vision on Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 2b): initiatives supporting partner coordination;
- IV. Background paper on achieving the vision on Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 2c): report from the Bureau.

For the high-level segment, the following document will be issued to inform deliberations:

- V. Key issues paper (agenda items 4 & 8): Perspectives and priorities for navigating policy and data to leave no one behind

Reference documents are:

- I. Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community (E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/REV.1)
- II. Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/RES/73/9)

In addition, ESCAP may work with governments and development partners to develop substantive information notes to support the deliberations and negotiations at the Session as needed.

7. Side events

There will be opportunities for side-events and exhibitions to be hosted by governments and development partners. These will be finalized as the secretariat develops the meeting programme.

8. Preparatory process

The bureau of the Committee on Statistics will oversee the preparations for the preparatory meeting and the High-level Sixth Committee in consultation with the members of the Committee and with support of the ESCAP Secretariat and the Thematic Working Group on Statistics under the Regional Coordination Mechanism in Asia and the Pacific. A key element of the preparatory process is the preparatory meeting in June.

The key elements of the preparatory process are:

- i. Engaging with ACPR on the intended focus of the High level sixth session of the committee on statistics

- ii. The Bureau of the Committee on Statistics devise a zero draft of the outcome document, February 2018 to May 2018 in consultations with established regional mechanisms reporting to the Committee on Statistics including the Regional Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics, the Regional Steering Group for Population and Social Statistics, the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, and the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific.
- iii. The draft outcome document will be made available for national consultation, (first round: May-June 2018; second round: July-Oct 2018)
- iv. Development partners will also be consulted on the draft outcome document through the Thematic Working Group on Statistics under the Regional Coordination Mechanism. (first round: May-June 2018; second round: July-Oct 2018)
- v. Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High level sixth session of the Committee on Statistics, June 12-14 2018

9. Objectives and participants of the preparatory meeting 12-14 June

The main objective of the preparatory meeting is to review the draft outcome document for the High-level Sixth session of the Committee on statistics. The preparatory meeting will be informed by a first draft of the “key issues paper.”

In addition, participants at the preparatory meeting may identify areas where further background information will be needed for the High level Sixth session of the Committee on Statistics, which could be prepared (by countries, partners or ESCAP) as information notes for the High level Sixth session of the Committee on Statistics.

Participants at the preparatory meeting are expected to be a balanced mix of national statisticians, representatives from ministries overseeing the work of national statistical offices as well as permanent representatives to ESCAP of members and associate members.