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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Statistics

Eighth session

Bangkok and online, 23–25 August 2022

Report of the Committee on Statistics on its eighth session

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Matters calling for action by the Commission

1. The Committee on Statistics requests that the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) support the Bureau of the Committee as it conducts a review of the groups and communities of practice supporting the Committee's work.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee are brought to the attention of the Commission:

Decision 1

The Committee endorses the revised terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics as contained in the annex to ESCAP/CST/2022/4.

Decision 2

The Committee decides that the technical working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific shall continue its work.

Decision 3

The Committee decides to feature data governance in its future work with an emphasis on sharing country experiences and facilitating the provision of technical assistance. It requests its Bureau to propose, in consultation with the secretariat, draft recommendations to that end for consideration by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

Decision 4

The Committee decides to feature the production and use of complementary progress measures in its future work with an emphasis on climate change-related statistics. It requests its Bureau to propose, in consultation with the secretariat, draft recommendations to that end for consideration by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

Decision 5

The Committee decides that its Bureau shall, with the support of the secretariat, conduct a review of the groups and communities of practice supporting the Committee's work and propose recommendations to that end for consideration by the Committee to streamline, consolidate and improve those groups and communities to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. This could include moving towards less formal collaboration mechanisms, as appropriate, that may be better suited to the complex world in which national statistical offices now operate, while bearing in mind the lead role played by such offices. Particular attention should be paid to arrangements and mechanisms to support statistical offices in their efforts to meet the growing demand for climate change-related statistics and to navigate complex data governance choices.

Decision 6

The Committee endorses the revised terms of reference of its Bureau as contained in ESCAP/CST/2022/7.

II. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

3. The Committee held its eighth session in Bangkok and online from 23 to 25 August 2022. The session was opened by the Minister of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand, Mr. Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn. The Executive Secretary, the Chair of the seventh session of the Committee, Mr. Gogita Todradze, and the Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made statements.

B. Attendance

4. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: 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; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Tonga; Türkiye; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

5. Representatives of Mexico, a Permanent Observer to ESCAP, attended.

6. A representative of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs attended.

7. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; International Labour Organization; International Organization for Migration (IOM); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)-Statistics Korea Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific; and United Nations Population Fund.

8. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Association of Southeast Asian Nations secretariat; Eurasian Economic Commission; Pacific Community; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies; and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century.

10. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of representatives of member States and reported upon them to the Committee. The credentials of 37 member States were found to be in order. The Bureau decided to defer any action on the credentials pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar at the eighth session of the Committee pending a decision by the General Assembly on the representation of Myanmar and in line with General Assembly resolution 396 (V) of 14 December 1950 and acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

11. The Committee took note of the oral report of the Bureau on credentials.

C. Election of officers

12. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Batdavaa Batmunkh (Mongolia)
Vice-Chairs:	Ms. Maria Musudroka (Fiji) Mr. Gobinda Prasad Samanta (India) Mr. Bakhodir Begalov (Uzbekistan)
Member:	Ms. Piyanuch Wuttisorn (Thailand)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Eng Chuan Koh (Singapore)

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. Follow-up on decisions made at the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics.
3. Progress on strengthening national statistical systems for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
 - (a) 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;
 - (b) Monitoring progress in response to the Get Every One in the Picture initiative on civil registration and vital statistics.
4. Regional initiatives and partnerships for strengthening national statistical systems for the implementation of 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.
5. Emerging issues:
 - (a) Measuring progress beyond gross domestic product;
 - (b) Data governance in a changing world.
6. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
7. 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 on the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session.

E. Other events

14. The following events were held in conjunction with the Committee session:

(a) 22 August 2022, expert dialogue on strengthening national statistical systems – sharing country experiences on data governance;

(b) 22 August 2022, expert dialogue on strengthening national statistical systems – linking country experiences to global and regional initiatives;

(c) 22 August 2022, visit to the National Statistical Office of Thailand, organized by the National Statistical Office of Thailand and ESCAP;

(d) 23 August 2022, side event: “Child and environment-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators: adoption, gaps and sources”, organized by UNEP, UNICEF and ESCAP;

(e) 23 August 2022, side event: “Innovative methodology to monitor Sustainable Development Goal 16”, organized by UNODC and UNODC-Statistics Korea Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific;

(f) 23 August 2022, side event: “High-frequency data collection using telephone interviews and real-time reporting: tested methodologies and country experiences”, organized by UNICEF;

(g) 24 August 2022, side event: “Role of regional statistics strategies in strengthening people-centred development”, organized by the Pacific Community;

(h) 24 August 2022, social event: “Speed dat(a)ing – getting to know you”;

(i) 24 August 2022, side event: “Launch of the *Asia-Pacific Migration Data Report 2021*”, organized by IOM;

(j) 24 August 2022, side event: “Leaving no one behind: strengthening statistical inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless populations at the national level”, organized by the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics;

(k) 25 August 2022, expert dialogue on the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century regional fall meeting in Asia and the Pacific – promoting inclusive data governance, organized by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century;

(l) 25 August 2022, side event: “National Sustainable Development Goal tracker clinic”;

(m) 26 August 2022, meeting of the Bureaux of the seventh and eighth sessions of the Committee.

III. Account of proceedings

15. The discussions held during the session have been summarized in an account of proceedings (see annex III).

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2022/1	Report on progress with regard to decisions made at the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics	2
ESCAP/CST/2022/2	Summary of progress towards commitments contained in the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/3	Report on the 8th meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2022/4	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	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/5	From gross domestic product to well-being and sustainability	5 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/6	Data governance in a changing world	5 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2022/7	Terms of reference of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics	7 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/8	Report of the Committee on Statistics on its eighth session	
A/77/6 (Sect. 19)	Proposed programme budget for 2023, section 19, on economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	6
ESCAP/77/12	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its sixteenth session	7 (b)
ESCAP/78/25	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventeenth session	7 (b)
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2022/L.1/Rev.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CST/2022/L.2	Draft report	9

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/1	Report on progress towards commitments contained in the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind	3 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/2	Reports on the 10th and 11th meetings of the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/3	Report on the 3rd meeting of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/4	Report on the technical working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/5	Reports on the 6th and 7th meetings of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific	4 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/6	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	4 (b)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/7	Report on the activities of the Bureau since the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics	7 (a)
ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/8	Report on the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific	7 (c)
<i>Information available online</i>		
www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-statistics-eighth-session	Information for participants	
www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-statistics-eighth-session	List of participants	
www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-statistics-eighth-session	Tentative programme	

Annex II

List of publications and webinars

I. Publications issued since the seventh session of the Committee

Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2022: Widening Disparities amid COVID-19. ST/ESCAP/2996 (Sales No. E.22.II.F.6)

Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021. ST/ESCAP/2935 (Sales No. E.21.II.F.4)

Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (United Nations publication, 2021)

Harnessing Time-Use Data for Evidence-based Policy, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform for Action (ST/ESCAP/2949)

Working Paper Series*

SD/WP/14: “Beyond GDP: the idea of global sustainability accounting”

SD/WP/13: “Big data for environment and agriculture statistics”

SD/WP/12: “Big data for the SDGs: country examples in compiling SDG indicators using non-traditional data sources”

Stats Briefs*

Issue no. 31: “Tapping into administrative data in census-taking: an emerging trend in Asia and the Pacific”

Issue no. 30: “Are population censuses in Asia and the Pacific evolving?”

Issue no. 29: “Big data for population and social statistics”

Issue no. 28: “Big data for economic statistics”

Issue no. 27: “Geospatial information and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Issue no. 26: “Population registers: a key resource for producing vital statistics”

Blog posts*

15 June 2022: “Improving our skills for mainstreaming gender statistics”

6 June 2022: “Beyond buzzwords: actioning gender mainstreaming in official statistics”

27 April 2022: “Getting everyone in the picture through assessing inequalities”

22 April 2022: “Innovation meets tradition: administrative data shaping censuses in Asia and the Pacific”

19 January 2022: “Building a more resilient future with inclusive civil registration and vital statistics”

* An asterisk denotes publications that are available online only.

27 October 2021: “Ocean accounts inform evidence-based sustainable development of the ocean economy”

19 May 2021: “Measuring SDG progress at the national level”

11 May 2021: “Celebrating the 1st anniversary of the data integration community of practice”

6 May 2021: “Every policy is connected: developing and monitoring inclusive policies”

5 May 2021: “Harnessing time-use data for gender equality policies and beyond”

28 April 2021: “A new tool to help register every birth and death”

23 April 2021: “Why big data is all the buzz for statisticians”

7 April 2021: “Statisticians connect for impactful South-South collaboration”

6 April 2021: “Partnership for the Goals: Earth observation and statistical communities unite for the SDGs”

2 April 2021: “Understanding human mobility with mobile phone data”

31 March 2021: “Surviving the COVID stress test: the leading experience of KOSTAT”

26 March 2021: “Are we REALLY getting everyone into the picture”?

10 December 2020: “Adopting rapid mortality surveillance for a post-COVID-19 era”

20 October 2020: “Connecting the Asia-Pacific region with data we can trust”

15 October 2020: “Communities of practice – a stop-gap solution during a pandemic or here to stay?”

27 August 2020: “Economic statistics for the 2030 Agenda: where does the Pacific stand?”

Op-eds*

17 March 2022: “Pandemic pushes SDGs further out of reach of Asia and the Pacific”

16 November 2021: “Push for civil registration set to hit key milestone in Asian and Pacific countries”

28 June 2021: “Universal civil registration and vital statistics are critical for truth, trust and COVID recovery in Asia and the Pacific”

20 April 2021: “Making oceans count”

16 March 2021: “Sustainable Development Goals can guide Asia and the Pacific to build back better, says UN report”

Other publications

“Ocean accounting briefs: China, Malaysia, Samoa, Thailand and Viet Nam”

“Assessment, analysis and redesign of civil registration and vital statistics processes – Maldives”

“How does the health sector accelerate improvements in civil registration and vital statistics?”, Policy brief

“Building identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific, the role of civil registration”, Policy brief

Emerging Trends in Census Approaches in Asia and the Pacific

“Guidelines for estimating completeness of civil registration of vital events”

Mapping Population Exposure to Flood Hazards: Step by Step Guide on the Use of QGIS

“Report of the expert group meeting on the uses of big data for official statistics: data governance and partnership models”

“Exposure to hazards assessment based on ‘POP-to-GUF’ methodology”

“Regional situation analysis: the state of production, dissemination, and use of disaster-related statistics in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific”

“Water and waste accounts reports”

“National SDG Tracker user manual”

Asia-Pacific Guidelines to Data Integration for Official Statistics

How COVID-19 Is Changing the World: A Statistical Perspective – Volume III

“Producing urban hotspot maps: step by step guide on the use of QGIS”

Producing land cover change maps and statistics: step by step guide on the use of QGIS and RStudio

Producing land cover change maps and statistics: guide on advanced use of QGIS and RStudio

“Constructing a new benchmark for Cambodian National Accounts: documentation of process and results”

“Developing the Statistics Law of the Lao People's Democratic Republic 2020: documentation of process and results”

“Monitoring the state of statistical operations under the COVID-19 pandemic in the Asia-Pacific region: highlights from a global COVID-19 survey of national statistical offices”

How COVID-19 Is Changing the World: A Statistical Perspective – Volume II

“Final report on youth consultations and regional virtual forum in preparation for the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific”

“Technical report for Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific CRVS Decade”

Gap Analysis of Current CRVS Registration Practices and Mapping of Potential Data-Sources Focusing on Marginalized Populations in Pakistan

II. Webinars (Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe series)

Information about all Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe sessions is available at www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/stats-cafe. The web page includes links to the recordings and presentations as well as descriptions of the sessions. Since the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics more than 50 Stats Cafe sessions have been held.

Annex III

Account of proceedings

I. Introduction

1. The eighth session of the Committee on Statistics was held on the theme “Governing data beyond 2030”. The topics to be discussed during the session had been determined by the Bureau of the seventh session. During the eighth session, representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities and specialized agencies and other stakeholders engaged in a dialogue on statistical development in Asia and the Pacific.

II. Summary of discussions

A. Opening of the session (agenda item 1)

2. Opening remarks were made by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP; the Minister of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand, Mr. Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn; the Executive Director of the National Statistics Office of Georgia and Chair of the seventh session of the Committee, Mr. Gogita Todradze; and the Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

B. Follow-up on decisions made at the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics (agenda item 2)

3. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Report on progress with regard to decisions made at the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics” (ESCAP/CST/2022/1).

4. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: China; Malaysia; and Pakistan.

5. The agenda item was introduced by the Chair.

6. The Committee welcomed and acknowledged the above-mentioned report and a couple of representatives described their own Governments’ efforts to mainstream gender. Some representatives welcomed the efforts made to promote the use of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and highlighted their own efforts in that regard.

7. Several representatives highlighted the secretariat’s conduct of knowledge-sharing sessions on big data-related issues and welcomed the training provided by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the benefits gained from those activities.

8. One representative suggested that more members and associate members should become involved in working groups, subcommittees and expert groups, so as to benefit from working together, in particular on new areas such as big data and environment and disaster statistics.

C. Progress on strengthening national statistical systems for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 3)

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 (agenda item 3 (a))

9. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Summary of progress towards commitments contained in the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind” (ESCAP/CST/2022/2) and the information document entitled “Report on progress towards commitments contained in the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/1).

10. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Tajikistan; United States of America; and Uzbekistan.

11. The agenda item was introduced by a Statistician in the Statistics Division of ESCAP.

12. The Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts made to monitor progress in official statistics in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and acknowledged the key findings contained in the documents before it.

13. The Committee noted the need to share knowledge and exchange good practices to strengthen national statistical systems for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and noted the offer by several member States to share such information, including on the establishment of guidelines for standardized processes for monitoring and evaluating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the establishment of processes to regularly collect and disseminate data at the national and subnational levels for public access, the modernization of national statistical systems anchored in the principles of accountability and transparency to instil trust in statistical systems, the establishment of regular information exchange channels with development partners, the enhancement of data governance by engaging with all users, including civil society organizations and private entities, and the minimization of data gaps through data integration.

14. The Committee recognized the need for strong coordination among national stakeholders and development partners, as well as the need for multi-stakeholder involvement, to monitor progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and for the implementation of the National SDG Tracker tool.

15. Several representatives shared information on the challenges faced by national statistical systems in advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda. Some of those challenges were linked to the restructuring of governance systems, the introduction of new legislation and limits in terms of institutional capacity, infrastructure capabilities and financial and human resources.

16. The Committee recommended that the secretariat and its partners assess changes in the policy environment and try to identify the causes of weakened progress on indicators in order to make effective and targeted improvements, increase the transparency of methodologies, use more recent data for up-to-date comparisons, strengthen coordination with member States to ensure that evaluation results reflect national perspectives and allow countries to identify national capacity gaps, and target capacity-building efforts for national statistical systems to improve the timeliness and relevance of statistical products, especially focusing on the effective use of new and non-traditional sources of data.

Monitoring progress in response to the Get Every One in the Picture initiative on civil registration and vital statistics (agenda item 3 (b))

17. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Report on the 8th meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CST/2022/3).

18. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; Georgia; Indonesia; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and United States of America.

19. The agenda item was introduced by the Acting Administrator General, Office of the Registrar, Fiji, and Chair of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Treta Sharma. A video showcasing highlights from the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2021, was shown.

20. The Committee expressed its commitment to realizing the shared vision set out in the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific and the targets contained in the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

21. The Committee acknowledged the findings and recommendations of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Several representatives expressed support for the proposal by the Regional Steering Group to extend the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) to align its time frame with that of the 2030 Agenda.

22. The Committee noted the need for increased coordination and knowledge-sharing between key national and subnational stakeholders at different levels of government and among members, associate members and development partners at the national, regional and international levels in order to effectively implement initiatives aimed at improving civil registration and vital statistics systems.

23. Representatives highlighted achievements in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems through streamlined institutional and legal arrangements, the introduction of digital technology to enhance registration and inter-agency data integration, and increased country-to-country and intracountry knowledge-sharing.

24. Several representatives noted that some areas needed improving, particularly with regard to the roles of national statistical offices in civil

registration and vital statistics systems and additional capacity-building on database management and system modernization. Representatives also said that they were willing to share information on experiences in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems and in producing vital statistics.

25. Representatives recommended that a ministerial conference be held in 2025 to share the outcomes of the final review of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024), increase the focus on marriage registration and harness digital technology to facilitate data-sharing and enhance the effectiveness and resilience of civil registration and vital statistics systems.

D. Regional initiatives and partnerships for strengthening national statistical systems for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 4)

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 (agenda item 4 (a))

26. The Committee had before it 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/2022/4) and the information documents entitled “Reports on the 10th and 11th meetings of the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/2), “Report on the 3rd meeting of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/3), “Report on the technical working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/4) and “Reports on the 6th and 7th meetings of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/5).

27. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Russian Federation; Singapore; and Thailand.

28. The Director of the Statistics Division of ESCAP spoke about the work of the secretariat. Subsequently, Mr. Mohd Yazid Kasim, Senior Director, Change Management Office, Department of Statistics, Malaysia, and Co-Chair of the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, spoke about the work of the Steering Group; Mr. Phub Sangay, Officiating Director, National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan, and Chair of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics, spoke about the work of the Regional Steering Group; Ms. Ariunaa Chadraabal, Head of Foreign Cooperation Division, National Emergency Management Agency, Mongolia, and Chair of the technical working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific, spoke about the work of the working group; and Ms. Zita Albacea, Professor, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Philippines, and Chair of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific, spoke about the work of the Network. In addition, a video on *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2022: Widening Disparities amid COVID-19*, a publication produced by the secretariat, was shown.

29. The Committee expressed its appreciation for and acknowledged the progress made in support of the collective vision and framework for action by groups responsible for implementing the regional initiatives of the Committee and by the secretariat.

30. The Committee also expressed appreciation for the initiatives to build statistical capacity in the region, expressed support for the expansion of partnerships among member States and key stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of national statistical services in the region, improve knowledge-sharing and strengthen coordination, and recommended developing curricula for teaching official statistics at universities in the Asia-Pacific region.

31. The Committee further expressed appreciation for the platform provided by the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific to share the latest developments in economic statistics in the region, noted the Steering Group's participation in global activities and the potential for collaborating with other steering groups and recommended that the Steering Group participate actively in the mechanisms of the Network of Economic Statisticians of the Statistical Commission.

32. The Committee expressed support for the implementation of a strategic workplan to improve disaster-related statistics in the region and for the continuation of an existing initiative to improve disaster-related statistics for risk-informed development.

33. The Committee expressed gratitude for the commitment and invaluable contribution of the thematic working group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific to improving disaster-related statistics and was informed of the work that the working group had done to calculate economic loss, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), due to disasters. Partnerships with data producers and intended users of disaster statistics were needed, as were technical assistance, further guidance and capacity-building in line with national interests and current global needs.

34. The Committee expressed support for the initiative of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific to develop further training modules in gender statistics and other branches of statistics and for the continuation of existing training modalities. The Russian Federation pledged voluntary contributions to initiatives aimed at improving skills for statistical monitoring and for training young statisticians in Central Asia. China pledged continued support through funds, technology and capacity-building activities.

35. The Committee was informed that Japan would co-host the 31st Population Census Conference, to be held in Tokyo from 29 November to 1 December 2022, which would be a platform for contributing to the comprehensive development of population censuses in the region and to share experiences on measures taken in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Initiatives by global, regional and subregional organizations in support of the collective vision and framework for action (agenda item 4 (b))

36. The Committee had before it the information document entitled "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" (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/6).

37. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: China; Indonesia; Malaysia; Pakistan; and Tajikistan.

38. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations made oral statements or submitted written statements: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

39. A representative of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century made a statement.

40. The Committee expressed appreciation to development partners – including the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries – for their involvement in the design and conduct of national population censuses and surveys – including labour force surveys, socioeconomic surveys, living standards measurement surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys, demographic and health surveys and time-use surveys – and in the compilation of disaster-related data.

41. The Committee called for further support to be provided by development partners to enhance national statistical infrastructures, compile data on undocumented migrants and produce data on the progress made towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal indicators where such data are still missing.

42. Representatives of the ASEAN secretariat and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries informed the Committee about the statistical capacity-building activities their entities had undertaken in the region since the seventh session of the Committee.

43. A representative of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century informed the Committee about the work of the Gender Data Network, which planned to expand its activities from selected countries in Africa to countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

E. Emerging issues (agenda item 5)

44. The agenda item was introduced by Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia, who shared some of the key messages from the expert dialogues held on 22 August 2022. The secretariat showed a video from a side event held during the seventy-eighth session of the Commission entitled “From GDP to well-being and sustainability: means and measures”, which provided information on the work done by some countries in that area.

Measuring progress beyond gross domestic product (agenda item 5 (a))

45. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “From gross domestic product to well-being and sustainability” (ESCAP/CST/2022/5).

46. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: China;

Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Singapore; and Thailand.

47. The Committee stressed that going beyond GDP progress measures was a priority for statistics development in the region and welcomed the many efforts being made by national statistical offices at the national and local levels.

48. The Committee noted that the broad and deepened focus on going beyond GDP-based measures reflected a much-needed, additional focus on meeting users' demands for statistics and recognized that such a shift required continuous efforts to transform and strengthen national statistical offices and systems.

49. The Committee was apprised of several initiatives in the region to develop and use complementary progress measures, including on environmental-economic accounting, ecosystem accounting, ocean accounting, environmental satellite accounts, gross ecosystem product, disasters, the circular economy, well-being, inclusive growth, quality of life, safety, happiness and the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Committee noted the gaps in data on climate change and pointed to the urgency of improving related statistics.

50. Referring to the GDP-generating statistical standard, the System of National Accounts, the Committee acknowledged that countries had a continuous need for technical support and that the demand for GDP-related figures at the subnational level had increased, not least in countries with decentralized governance structures. The Committee noted that the ongoing revision of the System of National Accounts had arguably made the System a standard that went beyond GDP.

51. The Committee recognized the benefit of learning from one another and welcomed the offer made by several representatives to share experiences and expertise on well-being and sustainability measures regionally. Noting the close linkages between comprehensive progress measures, data governance and statistical infrastructure, the Committee supported an integrated approach to taking those issues forward, possibly by involving a regional stocktaking exercise followed by the establishment of working groups that could follow through on priority aspects and common challenges.

Data governance in a changing world (agenda item 5 (b))

52. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled "Data governance in a changing world" (ESCAP/CST/2022/6).

53. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Bhutan; China; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

54. The representative of ASEAN also made a statement.

55. The Committee recognized the importance of data governance and expressed support for the incorporation of data governance into regional actions on official statistics.

56. The Committee advocated for the increased engagement of Asia-Pacific countries in global discussions, for example those held in the context of the Working Group on Data Stewardship.

57. The Committee recommended fostering dialogue and sharing knowledge and experience on data governance at the regional and global levels.

58. The Committee noted that there was no agreed definition of or guidance on data governance and recognized the need to define the role of national statistical offices within the evolving data ecosystem. Standards and guidelines should be developed at both the global and regional levels and relevant capacity-building opportunities should be provided.

59. The Committee acknowledged that a well-designed data governance framework was necessary to support access to quality and granular data for evidence-based decision-making in order to leave no one behind. Data security and protecting individuals' rights were emphasized. One representative stressed that data governance arrangements should support the ethical, equitable, impartial, safe and secure generation and use of data.

60. The Committee expressed appreciation for and welcomed the efforts made by the secretariat to organize expert dialogues and side events on data governance. The Committee also expressed appreciation for the work of global initiatives such as the Working Group on Data Stewardship and the publication of the *World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives*.

61. The Committee was informed of the following national initiatives and activities relevant to data governance: (a) the statistical database system initiative of Bhutan; (b) the global data security initiative of China; (c) the account aggregator of India; (d) the one data policy and one data forum of Indonesia; (e) the interoperability framework of Japan; (f) the appointment of chief data officers at state and federal agencies in Malaysia; (g) the new legislation of New Zealand reinforcing the role of the chief statistician by creating the role of Government Chief Data Steward; (h) the Statistical Data Hub Bureau of the Republic of Korea; (i) the data governance coordination mechanisms (steering groups) in Singapore; (j) the digital platform of Sri Lanka; (k) the data governance framework and the government data catalogue of Thailand; and (l) the information technology department at the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, to lead innovative approaches to data collection.

62. The Committee was invited to participate in the fourth United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in Hangzhou, China, from 24 to 27 April 2023, to jointly discuss and promote data governance at the global and regional levels.

63. The Committee was informed of the efforts being made to use big data for the production of official statistics, including the establishment of the regional hub for big data in China and of the National Big Data Analytics Centre in Malaysia, and of the extensive work being done to utilize new sources of data in Indonesia.

64. The Committee was also informed about the support provided by ASEAN to enhance the capacity of its member States on the use of big data to produce official statistics. The representative of ASEAN expressed appreciation to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for conducting relevant training courses, as well as to the Governments of Indonesia and Malaysia for their support in holding a series of capacity-building workshops in 2021.

F. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme (agenda item 6)

65. The Committee had before it the proposed programme budget for 2023, section 19, on economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (A/77/6 (Sect. 19)).

66. The Director of the Statistics Division of ESCAP introduced the agenda item and briefed the Committee on the future focus of the subprogramme.

G. Reports brought to the attention of the Committee (agenda item 7)

67. The Committee had before it the notes by the secretariat entitled “Terms of reference of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics” (ESCAP/CST/2022/7), “Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its sixteenth session” (ESCAP/77/12) and “Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventeenth session” (ESCAP/78/25) and the information documents entitled “Report on the activities of the Bureau since the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/7) and “Report on the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/8).

68. The Chair of the seventh session of the Committee introduced agenda item 7 (a), the Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific introduced agenda item 7 (b) and the Technical Adviser on Population and Development (Census and Data) of the UNFPA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, who is also Co-Chair of the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific, introduced agenda item 7 (c).

69. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Japan; and Malaysia.

70. Representatives expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Bureau to revise the terms of reference in order to clarify the Committee’s decision-making procedures during intersessional periods.

71. The representative of Japan congratulated the new members of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.

72. Representatives expressed appreciation for the efforts made to increase the availability of online training. The representative of Malaysia recommended that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific establish more partnerships with private sector and civil society entities and with custodian agencies of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and that it tailor its courses to countries’ needs, including emerging needs in the areas of administrative data, big data, the training of trainers and the modernization of national statistical systems.

73. The representative of Malaysia also recommended that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific diversify its resource base, including by calling upon members and associate members of the Commission to provide voluntary cash and in-kind contributions, and suggested that e-learning be reflected in the draft resource mobilization strategy.

74. The representative of Malaysia welcomed the efforts made by the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific to produce and maintain quality control over regional data and statistical products and also to ensure coherence and complementarity of regional support on data and statistics for countries.

H. Other matters (agenda item 8)

75. No other matters were discussed.

I. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session (agenda item 9)

76. On 25 August 2022, the Committee adopted the report on its eighth session.
