Terms of reference for Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics

I. Introduction

1. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics in 2011 established a Technical Advisory Group to provide recommendations on the strategic directions as well as substantive and methodological guidelines regarding strengthening national capacity to provide an agreed range of population and social statistics. The Group developed a core set of population and social statistics which the Committee endorsed on its third session in December 2012[1] and subsequently by Commission through its resolution 69/16 as a regional guideline for national capacity development.

2. The Technical Advisory Group further developed the Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics in Asia and the Pacific which the Committee endorsed on its fourth session in March 2015. At the same time, the Committee requested the Bureau to establish a Steering Group to oversee implementation of the Regional Strategy.[2]

II. Roles and responsibilities

3. The Steering Group will oversee the implementation of the Regional Strategy to achieve its vision.

4. More specifically, the Steering Group shall:

   a) Provide strategic and technical guidance on the implementation of the Regional Strategy, including through advocacy, resource mobilization, facilitating regional and subregional cooperation, and developing and disseminating relevant methodological guidelines;
   b) In consultation with the secretariat, identify short-term and long-term priorities and establish milestones for the implementation plan, monitor progress and propose any adjustments to the implementation plan as the needs arise;
   c) Provide strategic and technical guidance to the secretariat on the day-to-day management of the implementation activities.

III. Composition

5. The composition of the Steering Group shall take into consideration the responsibilities which focus on strong and effective strategic and technical leadership, advocacy and coordination as well as collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders.

6. Therefore, the Steering Group shall consist of representatives with senior management and technical responsibilities in population and social statistics from:

   - National statistical systems, including national statistical offices
   - National government bodies responsible for social inclusion

[1] Core set of population and social statistics for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/5/Add.1), available from www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5AE1.pdf.

[2] Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/14), available from: www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/CST4_14_Report-of-the CST4_English.pdf.

- policies and programmes as key users of population and social statistics
- International, regional, sub-regional and bilateral organizations whose mandate includes supporting improvements in the production, dissemination and user of population and social statistics.

7. The size of the Steering Group shall be decided by the Bureau and may be changed as needed to ensure that the Group continues to effectively and efficiently performs its functions.

IV. Selection of members

8. Members of the former Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics shall be invited to the Steering Group.
9. The Bureau shall, with assistance by the secretariat, issue invitations to ESCAP regional members and associate members as well as to relevant development partners to express interest in joining the Steering Group. The Bureau shall decide on the composition on the basis of the qualifications of nominees, the need for balanced representation, as well as the need for efficient and effective functioning of the Steering Group.
10. The Steering Group members shall be appointed for a period of two years. All members shall be eligible for re-appointments. Upon departure of an appointed member, the remaining Steering Group members shall recommend the most appropriate replacement for consideration and approval by the Bureau. Members of the Steering Group shall commit to devoting the time necessary for adequate discharge of their duties. Members of the Steering Group will not be considered staff members of the United Nations; hence, will not be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to staff members of the United Nations.

V. Functioning

11. It is envisaged that the Steering Group shall review most issues by electronic means.
12. The Steering Group shall decide at its first meeting the periodicity of its gatherings. It shall aim to meet regularly, either in person or per videoconferencing.
13. The Steering Group may decide to invite the participation of experts and/or form sub-groups for specific tasks.

VI. Reporting

14. The Steering Group shall submit a written and, if requested, oral report for the information of the Committee on Statistics on each of its formal sessions on progress in the implementation of the Regional Strategy.
15. The Steering Group shall report on regular basis to the Bureau through the ESCAP secretariat.

VII. Chair

16. One member shall act as the Chair of the Steering Group, who will guide its work. The Chair will serve for a period of two years after which s/he will be eligible for re-appointment.

VIII. Secretariat

17. The Statistics Division of ESCAP will serve as the secretariat and support the Steering Group in carrying out its responsibilities.

IX. Review of the terms of reference

18. The Steering Group shall, in consultation with the secretariat, review its Terms of Reference every two years to ensure that it has the necessary mandates to effectively and efficiently perform its functions. The revisions shall be subject to approval by the Committee on Statistics.

X. Sunset clause

19. The Steering Group shall be in place for the duration of the Regional Strategy to ensure continuity in its implementation.
20. Unless the Committee on Statistics or its Bureau decides otherwise, the Steering Group shall expire at the end of 2030.