

Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics

Terms of Reference

I. Background

In March 2018 at its 49th session, the UN Statistical Commission, in its decision 49/113, welcomed a greater focus on disaster-related statistics given the importance of the Sendai Framework. It also decided to include a separate item on this topic in the agenda for the 50th session, building on existing work in this emerging area.

Hence, UNSD, UNESCAP, UNECE, UNECLAC and UNDRR prepared a report on disaster-related statistics for the 50th Session of the UN Statistical Commission. This Report elaborated on the growing data demands and needs for this area of work and took stock of the current situation of activities around the world, with an emphasis on the constraints that developing countries face. It contained a summary of the work of the main international and regional organizations that are active in statistics relating to hazardous events and disasters. This demonstrated that there is already considerable complementarity, coordination and cooperation taking place on this topic under the purview of the UN Statistical Commission.

Based on the above-mentioned Report, during the deliberations in its 50th Session, in March 2019, the Statistical Commission recognized the need for better, disaggregated and comparable data for statistical measurement and to incorporate social, economic and environment statistics into disaster information. The 50th Session also provided an opportunity for the Commission to discuss ways to continue to build and strengthen a common statistical framework and a network of experts among the multiple disciplines and areas of expertise related to disaster-related statistics. In doing so, it considered options and modalities for the establishment of a formal mechanism for sustaining cooperation and coordination of statistics related to hazardous events and disasters across the expert communities, organizations and regions of the statistical community with the international and regional organizations taking the lead in supporting the same. It also emphasized the need for further capacity development and training on this important topic and especially appreciated the leading role of UNESCAP in advancing the initial methodology development through the disaster-related statistics framework, which serves as a good starting point for a universally applicable tool of global relevance.

In the 50th Session, the Statistical Commission made a decision (50/116)¹ to request the organizations (UNSD, UNESCAP, UNECE, UNECLAC and UNDRR) to work together in consultation with members of the existing regional expert groups and task forces to consider options and modalities for the establishment and coordination of: (a) a formal mechanism under the purview of the Commission to progress a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics; (b) a network across the expert communities to sustain cooperation, coordination and fundraising for enhancing statistics related to hazardous events and disasters; and (c) report back to the Commission at a suitable time.

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/Report-on-the-50th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>),

II. Mandate

This Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics is set up as per the decision (50/116) of the UN Statistical Commission taken at its 50th Session in 2019.

III. Objective

This Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on Disaster-related Statistics is a formal mechanism under the purview of the UN Statistical Commission established with the primary objective to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics involving a network across the expert communities to sustain cooperation, coordination and fundraising for enhancing statistics related to hazardous events and disasters.

IV. Key Functions

- Take into consideration regionally agreed-upon statistical frameworks, schemas, systems and practices for disaster-related statistics, where available, to inform the above-mentioned process.
- Regularly organize an expert forum to sustain cooperation, coordination and fundraising for enhancing statistics related to hazardous events and disasters.

V. Membership and Composition

The IAEG shall include the following:

- Representatives of Member States from national statistical offices and disaster risk reduction related organizations
- Institutions designated by the leadership of existing regional groups working on disaster-related statistics and the global Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters under the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) (Note: One designation per group will be accepted, see section “Methods of Work” for a list of relevant regional groups)
- Core Group comprising of UNSD, UNESCAP, UNECE, UNECLAC, UNESCWA, UNECA and UNDRR
- Representatives of other relevant international and regional organizations

For the expert forum, a broader range of subject matter experts from Member States, other United Nations System entities, Multi-lateral Development Banks and other relevant international organizations could be invited. The Group will also invite experts, as appropriate, from academic, civil society, and the private sector to contribute their expertise and experiences on disaster-related statistics.

VI. Co-Chairs and Core Group

Initially, until December 2021, the IAEG shall have UNESCAP and UNDRR as Co-Chairs. From 2022 onwards, the leadership of the IAEG shall comprise one member State representative and one Core Group representative. Co-Chairs shall be elected by the IAEG for a two-year term.

The Co-Chairs shall provide leadership and coordination to the full functioning of the IAEG.

After the expiry of their term, former Co-Chairs shall provide support to the newly appointed Co-Chairs to facilitate continuity.

VII. Secretariat

The Secretariat shall provide the day-to-day management and coordination, host and maintain a workspace, and undertake all internal and external communication on behalf of the IAEG.

In cooperation with the co-chairs, the Secretariat shall organize and develop the agenda for the IAEG meetings, maintain its workspace, issue notices from the Group and undertake other support activities deemed necessary. The status of the secretariat shall be reviewed at the end of the first year.

VIII. Methods of Work

The IAEG shall work through electronic exchanges and regular meetings. It shall operate with the help of a workspace to facilitate collaboration, knowledge management and information sharing.

The IAEG shall organize a regular expert forum on disaster related statistics subject to availability of resources. Where feasible, the meetings shall be conducted in conjunction with the events of the statistics and disaster risk reduction communities. Other meetings shall be convened on the basis of need and with specific tasks to be accomplished.

The IAEG shall liaise as required with other international groups closely linked to disaster-related statistics that include the following:

- UNESCAP Technical Working Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- UNECE Steering Group on Climate Change-related Statistics and Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters
- UNSC Expert Group on Environment Statistics
- UN-GGIM Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters
- Working Group² on Disaster-related Indicators under the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas

Should the need arise, the IAEG may establish sub-groups or task teams to work on particular aspects of its work programme. All sub-groups or task teams must have defined deliverables, delivery milestones and fixed timelines by which all sub-groups or task teams must bring their respective tasks to a satisfactory conclusion.

² Members of the Working Group are Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru, being Paraguay and Peru the coordinating countries.

IX. Reporting

The Co-Chairs, with support from the Secretariat, shall coordinate, monitor and report on the activities of IAEG and any sub-groups or task teams thereof, to the Bureau of the UN Statistical Commission.

The IAEG shall report to the UN Statistical Commission at suitable times through written reports and background documents including but not limited to the 52nd session of the Commission in 2021.

X. Review of the Terms of Reference

The IAEG shall review the Terms of Reference (TOR) following the report to the UN Statistical Commission at its 52nd session.

In addition, the IAEG may review the current TOR as the need arises, to ensure that it carries out its functions efficiently and effectively based on its mandate.