

# Draft Discussion Paper

## Asia-Pacific High-Level Consultation on Financing for Development

Jakarta, Indonesia

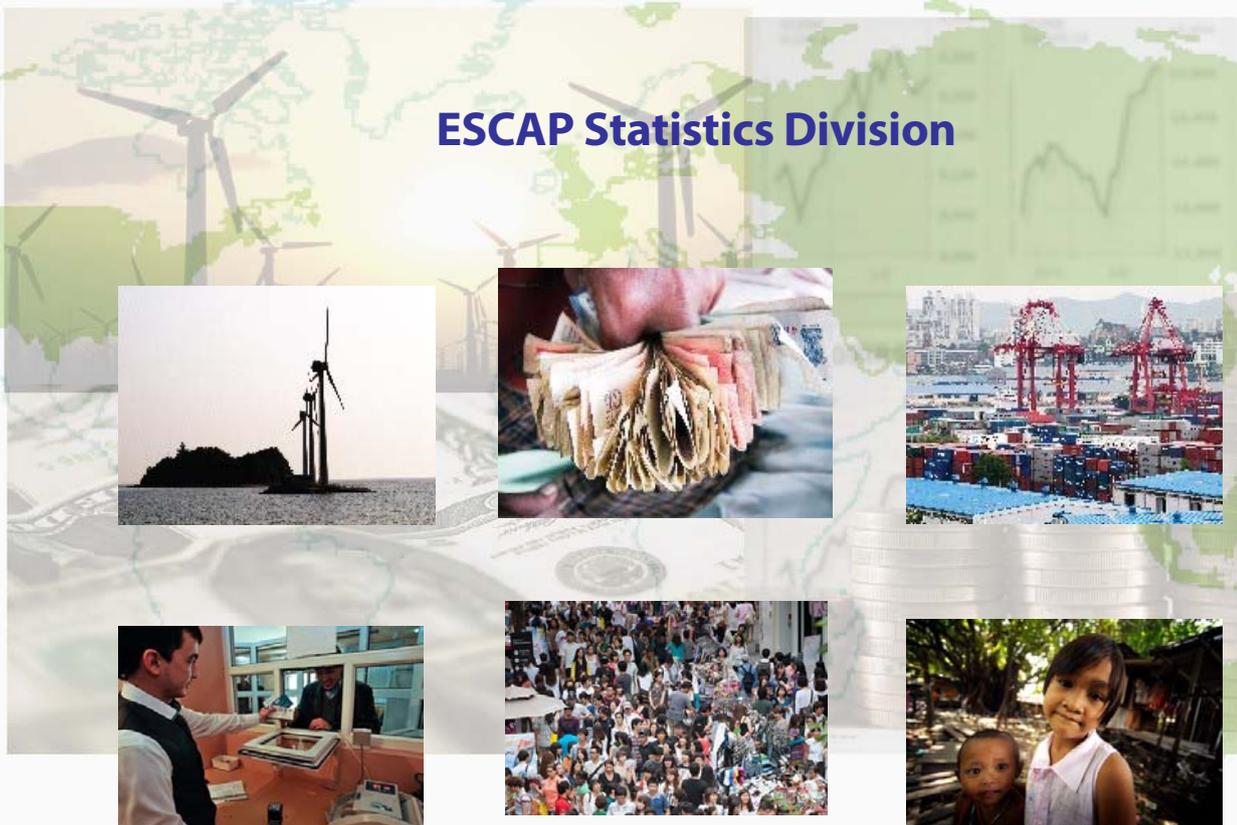
29-30 April 2015

### Financing Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific

**ESCAP/FfD/13/2015**

**April 2015**

#### ESCAP Statistics Division



# FINANCING STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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*Please cite this paper as:*

ESCAP/SD (2015). Financing Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific. Draft discussion paper submitted to Asia-Pacific High-Level Consultation on Financing for Development meeting, Jakarta, Indonesia, 29-30 April. Available from [www.unescap.org/events/hlcffd2015](http://www.unescap.org/events/hlcffd2015).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper, prepared by ESCAP Statistics Division, discusses four main questions:

1. Scope of statistics development in Asia and the Pacific in the context of the post-2015 development agenda
2. Existing costing exercises for the improvement of national statistical systems
3. Estimated financing need for statistics development in Asia-Pacific in the period leading up to 2030
4. Ways of improving the estimates of financing needs for statistics development in the region and beyond

Based on limited data, the lower bound figure required for statistics development in the region is calculated as between **USD 370-380 million per annum for the period 2016-2030**.

## 2. WHAT DOES STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC MEAN IN THE WAKE OF THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA?

Over the past decade, the international statistical community has made several attempts at understanding the magnitude of resources it would take to strengthen national statistical systems<sup>1</sup> with various substantive and geographical scopes and reference periods. In the ESCAP region, the scope of statistics development is currently defined by the strategic goals of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics:

- (a) ensuring that all countries in the region by 2020 have the capability to provide an agreed basic range of population, economic, social and environmental statistics; and
- (b) creating a more adaptive and cost-effective information management environment for national statistical offices through stronger collaboration.<sup>2</sup>

In a nutshell, the target of the region is to develop well-resourced and well-functioning statistical systems that produce and disseminate a basic range of official statistics required for policymaking in line with internationally agreed standards including the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.<sup>3</sup> Over the past 15 years, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has had a significant influence on the statistical work programmes of developing countries and has mobilised available and additional resources to support production of the required data for MDG monitoring. In many cases, such data was obtained through donor-driven and ad-hoc surveys and in some cases through modelling which did not involve national statistical systems at all, e.g. for environment statistics. In other words, the building of enduring national statistical capacities to inform socio-economic development was not central to the MDG agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> National statistical systems cover all statistical units and departments across the government that are involved in the production and dissemination of official statistics. National statistical systems are coordinated by national statistical offices.

<sup>2</sup> ESCAP (2010). "Proposed strategic directions of the Committee on Statistics" E/ESCAP/CST(2)/2.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics please see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/FP-Rev2013-E.pdf>

### *Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific*

The ESCAP Committee on Statistics is the highest-level decision making body in the region, comprising leaders of national statistical systems. The Committee implements its decisions through its Bureau and the subsidiary bodies supported by the secretariat. These bodies work in their respective areas of statistics to identify development priorities and to design and implement regional initiatives for building enduring capacity of national statistical systems. The following are the current bodies formed under the auspices of the Committee:

- Regional Steering Group for Agricultural Statistics (established jointly with the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics)
- Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics
- Strategic Advisory Board for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific
- Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics
- Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific
- Partners for Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific

Training is an important component of institutional capacity building. ESCAP's statistical training arm, the Statistical Institute for Asia (SIAP) prioritises its focus areas in accordance with various United Nations mandates and the strategic goals of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics. SIAP's training programme covers a range of courses on foundations and methods of official statistics, the statistical business process, and specialized domains of social, population, gender, economic, agricultural and rural, and environment statistics and is approved by its Governing Council. SIAP also provides the secretariat support to the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific.

The emerging post-2015 development agenda, on the other hand, is cognizant of the fact that “too often, development efforts have been hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live” and calls for a “data revolution”, which reflects statistics development in essence.<sup>4,5</sup> In the current proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), statistics development is covered in two targets within the goal area, means of implementation: Target 17.18: enhancing capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and Target 17.19: developing measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries.<sup>6</sup> Taking the proposed SDGs as the firmest reference available, one can characterize the data revolution as the means—or the combination of resources, innovations and reforms that is required—to achieve these targets.

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the data revolution concept please see “Data Revolution: Harnessing the power of statistics”. ESCAP Stats Brief, No: 3” at

[http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Stats\\_Brief\\_Data\\_revolution\\_Dec2014\\_Issue\\_03.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Stats_Brief_Data_revolution_Dec2014_Issue_03.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Please see “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Agenda”. Available at: [http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP\\_P2015\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Please see the “Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals”. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

Further to this shift in emphasis on statistical capacity, the broader substantive scope of the new development agenda being set on economic, social and environment pillars necessitates an integrated approach to sustainable development analysis and hence makes the role of statistics in providing harmonised concepts, classifications and measurements central to the achievement of the SDGs.

### *ESCAP and Data Revolution*

Of the subsidiaries bodies to the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, the Strategic Advisory Board for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific (SAB-AP) has a unique position, as it comprises heads or deputies of national statistical offices and focuses on system-wide issues. As recognized by the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics in its paper submitted to the fourth session of the Committee: “SAB-AP has a key role to play in offering generic solutions for modernisation of statistical systems and increasing efficiency gains. Moreover, SAB-AP is the best placed among all the subsidiary groups, given its substantive focus and the level of representation, to take the lead in mobilising resources for the implementation of the Committee’s strategic goals with reference to the data revolution. As part of such efforts, SAB-AP may also advise on possible ways for brokering public-private partnerships in order to facilitate the use of alternative technologies and/or sources of data for development for groups of countries”.<sup>7</sup>

The strategy of SAB-AP for 2014-16 has three broad themes:

- (a) Testing global modernisation solutions in the regional context
- (b) Influencing global modernisation work.
- (c) Creating modernisation solutions for regional priority areas

More concretely, current regional priorities identified by SAB-AP cover—in addition to advocacy for modernisation of statistical systems and testing common statistical production architecture in the region—exploring and creating awareness of possible uses of big data for official statistics. The overlapping membership in SAB-AP and the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, established in 2014, ensures that regional perspectives are reflected in the global discussions and standards setting. Furthermore, the task team dealing with advocacy and communication under the Global Working Group is led jointly by Bangladesh and the ESCAP Statistics Division and the task team on training, skills and capacity building is being jointly led by United Arab Emirates and SIAP.

An Expert Group Meeting convened by the ESCAP Statistics Division (9-10 December 2014)<sup>8</sup> and the fourth session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics (25-27 March 2015)<sup>9</sup> confirmed that the current understanding of statistics development in the region encapsulated in the Statistic Committee’s strategic goals remain relevant in the post-2015 era characterized by a data revolution. By the same token, the ESCAP Committee on Statistics recommended that a thorough review of the existing regional initiatives on agricultural and rural statistics, civil registration and vital statistics, economic statistics and population and social statistics be

<sup>7</sup> ESCAP (2015). “Strengthening data and statistics for the development agenda beyond 2015 in Asia and the Pacific” E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.2.

<sup>8</sup> For further information on the Expert Group Meeting and related documents please visit <http://www.unescap.org/events/statistics-and-data-post-2015-development-agenda-implications-regional-collaboration-asia-and>

<sup>9</sup> ESCAP (2015). “The Report of the Committee on its fourth session” E/ESCAP/CST(4)/14.

undertaken in order to determine whether the capabilities that these initiatives are aiming to build in the region sufficiently support the capacity development needed for the measurement of the sustainable development goals including the achievement of the two SDG targets covering statistics development, means of implementation.

### **3. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE TO DETERMINE THE COST OF STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT?**

The diagram below gives a review of selected costing exercises that have been undertaken for strengthening national statistical systems.<sup>10</sup> The difficulty in comparing these estimates lies in the fact that their substantive and geographical scopes vary widely as well as the time periods they consider. In the case of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, for instance, the methodology covers the average annual running cost based on the General Data Dissemination System of the IMF, which gives a dissemination plan for statistical outputs under several domains and the average annual development costs, and calculates what is needed from international sources as the difference between the domestic finance available and the estimated annual cost.<sup>11</sup> Other studies have focused on specific data sources such as the civil registration and vital statistics systems or a set of surveys to collect the data for monitoring international development goals.

The most reliable approach in reaching an overall figure for statistics development for the entire region would be a compilation of the assessments of individual national statistical systems against agreed common criteria. These criteria or such data, however, are not readily available. An assessment of the required financing for statistics development has to go beyond the costing of a suite of statistical outputs and quantify the resources needed for establishing or enhancing the institutional framework, statistical infrastructure and the human capabilities to allow for sustainable production of quality official statistics taking into account regional and global guidelines and standards.

In addition, the starting point for statistics development in the countries in the region varies widely. The diversity of the region, home to 31 countries with special needs and five members of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, is reflected in the capacities of national statistical systems, as in all spheres of socio-economic development. When it comes to statistical systems the sheer size of national statistical offices ranging from one-digit numbers to thousands is an indicator of the immense regional diversity.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The following studies referred to in the diagram are not referenced elsewhere in the present paper. In order to access “Towards a New Industrial and Business Statistics Programme for Developing Countries” please visit [http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user\\_media/Publications/Research\\_and\\_statistics/Branch\\_publications/Research\\_and\\_Policy/Files/Working\\_Papers/2009/WP%2009%20Towards%20a%20New%20Industrial%20and%20Business.pdf](http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Publications/Research_and_statistics/Branch_publications/Research_and_Policy/Files/Working_Papers/2009/WP%2009%20Towards%20a%20New%20Industrial%20and%20Business.pdf); for the “Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Scaling up Investment Plan 2015-2024” please see <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/05/19581045/global-civil-registration-vital-statistics-scaling-up-investment-plan-2015-2024>; and for “Costing a Data Revolution” please see [http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/demombynes-sandefur-costing-data-revolution\\_1.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/demombynes-sandefur-costing-data-revolution_1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> “Better Data for Better Results An Action Plan for Improving Development Statistics”. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SCBEXTERNAL/Resources/MarrakechActionPlanforStatistics.pdf?resourceurlname=MarrakechActionPlanforStatistics.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> For examples of staff sizes of national statistical offices please see the “Skills Audit Analysis Results 2011” for the Pacific. Available at: [http://www.unsiap.or.jp/tnetwork/1404\\_network\\_meeting/spc\\_HOPS%20IP-2%20Skills%20Audit,%202011.pdf](http://www.unsiap.or.jp/tnetwork/1404_network_meeting/spc_HOPS%20IP-2%20Skills%20Audit,%202011.pdf) and annual reports of national statistical offices, e.g. “Annual Report 2013-14 for Australian Bureau of Statistics” is available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1001.0>

## FINANCING STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT: EXISTING EVIDENCE

*Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics*, a **WB** and **OECD** initiative, estimates the additional resources needed to complement existing national investments as between **US\$ 140-160 million** per year.  
**Substantive Scope:** Set up of a basic minimum operating system within NSOs.  
**Geographical Scope:** Low, lower-middle and upper-middle income countries as defined by the World Bank in 2004.

**WB** and **WHO** *Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Scaling up Investment Plan 2015-2024* estimates the total development costs for CRVS as around **US\$ 3.82 billion** over ten years with the additional resources needed as **US\$ 1.99 billion** over ten years, i.e. an average of **US\$ 199 million** per year.  
**Substantive Scope:** CRVS system.  
**Geographical Scope:** 73 members of the United Nations Commission on Information and Accountability (COIA).

**Demombynes** and **Sanderfur's** *Costing a Data Revolution* provides a review of the estimates in Jerven (2014) and assesses that a smaller amount of **US\$ 300 million** per annum is required to close data collection gaps.  
**Substantive Scope:** Population censuses, LSMS, DHS, CWIQ.  
**Geographical Scope:** Countries below with a GDP per capita **US\$ 2,000 (PPP)**.

2004

2009

MAY 2014

SEPT 2014

OCT 2014

FEB 2015

**Shyam Upadhaya (UNIDO)** in *Towards a New Industrial and Business Statistics Programme for Developing Countries* provides cost estimates for industrial statistics programme run by UNIDO with a focus on LDCs.  
**Substantive Scope:** Estimates for development of business registers, industrial surveys and establishment surveys.  
**Geographical Scope:** Not defined.

**Morten Jerven (Copenhagen Consensus Centre)** estimates the global cost of sustaining 8 MDGs in the period 1990-2015 as around **US\$ 27 billion**, i.e. about **US\$ 1.08 billion** per annum.  
**Substantive Scope:** Population censuses, LSMS, DHS, CWIQ.  
**Geographical Scope:** 138 countries, including wealthier countries such as Chile, South Korea, Kuwait.

**SDSN et al.,** *A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development* estimates the total cost for the 2016-2030 SDG period as around **US\$ 11.4-12.4 billion**, i.e. an average of **US\$ 760-830 million** per annum.  
**Substantive Scope:** National survey programmes, population census, administrative data (civil registration and vital statistics and education management information systems), economic statistics (including industrial establishment surveys, improvements to real sector statistics, geospatial and environmental monitoring tools).  
**Geographical Scope:** 77 IDA and blend countries.

#### 4. WHAT ESTIMATES CAN BE REACHED GIVEN THE CURRENT DATA ON FINANCING NEEDS FOR STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT?

In the absence of detailed assessments at the country level, two estimated figures have been calculated based on the studies by SDSN et al.<sup>13</sup> and Jerven (2014)<sup>14</sup> referred to in the above diagram. The geographical scope has been limited to 41 countries in the region, i.e. all ESCAP regional member States except the high-income economies, as determined by the World Bank's Atlas methodology. The figures are conservative and should be regarded as a lower bound of the cost of financing statistics development in the region, as they do not take into account costs associated with the improvement of the institutional framework, statistical infrastructure and human resources.<sup>15</sup>

It has to be noted, however, that the substantive scope of the SDSN methodology is much wider than that of Jerven's, as it covers national survey programmes, population census, administrative data, economic statistics, geospatial and environmental monitoring tools. In other words, the SDSN methodology refers, to varying degrees, to underlying statistics for all three pillars of sustainable development. Jerven's substantive scope, on the other hand, is limited to surveys for the monitoring of the eight MDGs and does not take into account environment statistics at all. Finally, both studies disregard possible efficiency gains that can be obtained through modernisation of statistical systems and improved coordination at the national and international levels.

Methodology A. Combining the two approaches outlined by SDSN and Jerven in order to cover the 41 countries mentioned above, a total figure of nearly USD 6 billion (USD 5,598,889,000) is obtained. This corresponds to the amount needed in order to finance statistics development over the next 15 years in the region. The annual requirement for statistics development based on this methodology is hence around **USD 373 million**.

Methodology B. Basing the calculation only on Jerven's methodology within the framework of the eight MDGs and with reference to the population size of the countries, the total figure reached for the same group of 41 countries over 15 years is similar at USD 5,687,752,000. In other words, the average annual cost of financing statistics development in the 41 countries comes down to around **USD 379 million**.

#### 5. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE ESTIMATES OF FINANCING NEEDS FOR STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION?

Global efforts in quantifying the cost of data revolution continue under the leadership of SDSN and in partnership with Open Data Watch, the World Bank, PARIS21, CIESIN, Simon Fraser University, UNICEF, the One Campaign. Efforts at the regional level can complement these global exercises and ensure that realistic figures are taken as reference in national and regional planning. In order to ensure the sustainability of well-resourced and well-functioning statistical systems, the distinction should be made for regular operations that have to be supported at the

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<sup>13</sup> SDSN et al. (2015, forthcoming). "A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development: Developing a typology to assess the cost". Briefing Paper.

<sup>14</sup> Jerven, Morten (2014). "Data for Development Assessment Paper. Benefits and Costs of the Data for Development Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda". Copenhagen Consensus Centre. Available at: [http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/data\\_assessment\\_-\\_jerven.pdf](http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/data_assessment_-_jerven.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Please see Annex for the details of the methodologies.

national level and support areas for international cooperation, e.g. development and testing of new methodologies and associated training.

The starting point for a thorough regional needs assessment is the review of the existing regional initiatives to ensure alignment of scope and objectives with a view to supporting the monitoring of SDGs and the achievement of targets 17.18 and 17.19, as requested by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics at its fourth session. This review then has to be followed up on with national statistical system-wide assessments taking into account the cost of maintaining operations, implementing internationally agreed standards and research and development in the post-2015 era where national statistical systems are asked to be information providers rather than mere data producers. There are efficiency gains to be obtained through modernisation of statistical systems as well as through better coordination at the national and regional levels and these benefits have to be assessed and factored in for a realistic evaluation of the resources needed for financing statistics development in Asia and the Pacific, post-2015. For instance, the initial investment cost for establishing or modernising administrative statistical systems is potentially high but would likely reduce survey costs in the short-to-medium term to a significant extent. Moreover, well-maintained administrative data sources are likely to be more sustainable than surveys and to have positive spill-over effects for improving governance at large.

To conclude, it has to be reiterated that the estimates given above provide a lower bound for the financing needs for statistics development in the region; the minimum amount required corresponding to a figure between USD 370-380 million per annum for the 41 countries considered.

## **ANNEX. DETAILS OF THE METHODOLOGIES USED TO QUANTIFY FINANCING NEEDS FOR STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Both methodologies employed to come up with an estimate for the cost of statistics development for the period between 2016 and 2030 cover the following 41 countries in the region based on the income groupings derived from the World Bank Atlas Method:

**Low income economies (8):** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan.

**Lower middle-income economies (22):** Armenia, Bhutan, Fiji, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

**Upper middle-income economies (11):** Azerbaijan, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Palau, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu.

**Methodology A (Data sources: SDSN (2015) and Jerven (2014))**

The main assumption underlying the SDSN-led study “A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development” is that the countries enrolled for grants or concessional financing from the International Development Association (IDA)<sup>16</sup> and blend countries are considered in need of external assistance to improve statistical capacity to monitor the sustainable development goals. The study covers only seven IDA countries from the ESCAP region, namely: Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Samoa, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste. In terms of the substantive scope, SDSN covers the following components of statistical operations: national survey programmes (including household surveys, agricultural surveys and labour force surveys), population census, administrative data (civil registration and vital statistics and education management information systems), economic statistics (including industrial establishment surveys, improvements to real sector statistics and excluding labour force surveys and trade statistics), geospatial and environmental monitoring tools. The costs cover strengthening statistical literacy, analytics, and communications and exclude human resources and the costs associated with putting in place appropriate policy and legislative frameworks.

“Benefits and Costs of the Data for Development Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda” by Jerven, on the other hand gives the estimated cost for four data collection operations based on the millennium development goals experience and population size:

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<sup>16</sup> IDA enrolled and blend countries can be found at <http://www.worldbank.org/ida/borrowing-countries.html>.

### Estimated costs for key data collections per capita

	<u>Small Population</u>	<u>Medium Population</u>	<u>Large Population</u>
<b>Population range</b>	1-5 million	5-20 million	20+ million
<b>Census (every 10 years)</b>	\$1/person	\$2/person	\$3/person
<b>LSMS (every 5 years)</b>	\$0.4 Million	\$0.9 Million	\$1.5 Million
<b>DHS (every 5 years)</b>	\$0.8 Million	\$1 Million	\$1.2 Million
<b>CWIQ (annually)</b>	\$330,000/Year	\$500,000/Year	\$665,000/Year

The author leaves out Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, as there is no financial data available on this survey.

Of the 41 countries in the region, the figures are readily available in Jerven's study except for the following: Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The estimates for these eight countries are based on other countries for which estimates are available and have similar population density and income.

#### **Methodology B (Data source: Jerven (2014))**

The calculations are based on the above estimate scale given in Jerven (2014) and with the assumption that the unit cost would be similar to the estimates provided for the period 1990-2015 in the period 2016-2030. As in Methodology A, the estimates for Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are based on other countries for which estimates are available and which have similar population density and income.