Fifth meeting of the
Steering Group for the Regional Programme for Economic Statistics (SGRPES)
5-6 May 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

Report of the Meeting

I. Introduction

1. The fifth meeting of the Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics was held in Bangkok on 5-6 May 2016. The following Steering Group members were represented at the meeting: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Turkey, Viet Nam, the Asia-Pacific Regional Steering Committee of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, ADB, ILO, and SPC. FAO and UNSD participated as observers.1

2. Mr Jeff Cope (Chair) and Ms Badamsetseg Batjargal (Co-chair) chaired the fifth meeting.

3. All meeting documents are accessible at http://www.unescap.org/events/fifth-meeting-steering-group-regional-programme-economic-statistics-rpes.

4. Feed-back on the meeting as provided by participants is reported in Annex III of this report.

II. Organization of the meeting

5. The objectives of the meeting were the following:

   a) Review the implementation and monitoring of the Regional Programme on Economics Statistics (RPES) and the work programme:
      - Contribution of the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week to RPES implementation
      - National and regional reports on the progress made and priorities for economic statistics development
      - Capacity screening II (2017)

1 Please see Annex II for the complete list of participants.
- Progress report from SGRPES to the fifth session of the Committee on Statistics
  b) Review of the role, responsibilities and functioning of the Steering Group

6. The provisional programme for the meeting was adopted.²

III. Decisions and follow-up actions

Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week (APES)

Decisions

7. There was unanimous support for organizing the APES seminars on a regular basis (either annually or biennially); the Steering Group noted that among evaluations by participants, a clear majority had preferred APES as an annual event.

8. It was agreed that Steering Group members should take a leading role in organizing future seminars given the positive experience in the first APES seminar where four out of five sessions were organized by Steering Group members (Turkey, Mongolia, Australia and ADB) and seven members presented papers (India, Mongolia, New Zealand, Viet Nam, ADB and SPC).

Follow-up actions

9. A task force to be established for the organization of the next APES seminar with support from the secretariat;

10. The leadership of the Steering Group³ to decide on the frequency of future APES meetings based on the recommendation by the task force;

11. The task force to consider organizing the meeting of the Steering Group before the seminar in future APES.

Substantive priorities for the implementation of RPES

Highlights on national economic statistics development

12. The following substantive focus areas were highlighted (in no particular order) in reports by countries on progress made and priorities for economic statistics development:

² Please see Annex I for the programme of the meeting.
³ Please see section on “Leadership and functioning of the Steering Group” for decisions on the future leadership of the Steering Group.
a) National accounts: GDP rebasing, e.g. use data collected through economic censuses, integrated national accounts, institutional sector accounts, quarterly national accounts, SUTs
b) Measurement of natural resources
c) Labour/employment statistics
d) Short-term economic statistics
e) Statistical Business Registers
f) Metadata frameworks
g) Quality assurance frameworks

13. Some Steering Group members, in their country report, highlighted training courses, training materials and related quality assurance, as important to address capacity barriers. In reference to that, the meeting was informed by the secretariat of the Network for Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific, and encouraged to work with a through the Network to take related activities forward.

**Decision**

14. The Steering Group agreed that the members’ involvement as substantive expert reviewers of national study proposals submitted to the secretariat has worked well and should be continued within the “Resource Facility.”

**Follow-up actions**

15. Based on the above highlights and bearing in mind that the work programme of the Steering Group would comprise the combined work programmes of a series of topical Task Forces (please see Leadership and functioning of the Steering Group below) ; the leadership of the Steering Group to decide which substantive task forces are to be created.

16. The leadership of the Steering Group, supported by the secretariat, to prepare draft terms of reference for each of the proposed task forces for circulation to the wider Steering Group.

**Second round of the Capacity Screening exercise (2017)**

**Decisions**

17. Steering Group agreed to the recommendations by the task force that reviewed the Capacity Screening tool.

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4 http://www.unsiap.or.jp/tnetwork/index.html
5 The Resource Facility is a mechanism being put in place by the secretariat to support national statistical systems to conduct analytical and methodological studies for developing their economic statistics. The Resource Facility is scheduled to be launched in August 2016.
18. For the statistical infrastructure section of the questionnaire, the Steering Group recommended that questions should be added to determine if related surveys are financed by the government or by other sources.

**Follow-up actions**

19. A task force to be formed to oversee the implementation of the Capacity Screening in 2017, including the preparation of the screening questionnaire.

**Economic Statistics and SDGs**

**Decisions**

20. The Steering Group agreed that links between SDGs and RPES should be demonstrated in order to leverage the 2030 Agenda for advocacy and resource mobilization for economic statistics. The indicative mapping of the Core Set elements to the global list of SDG indicators presented by the secretariat as well as the work of the Trade Focal Area were noted in this regard.

**Follow-up actions**

21. Steering Group members to read the background documents and provide more comments to the secretariat.

22. The leadership of the Steering Group to consider establishing an SDG-related task force.

**Steering Group’s report to the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, fifth session**

23. The Steering Group agreed to the suggested outline of the report prepared by the secretariat with the following comments:

   a) Progress overview: Rather than launching a progress data collection exercise before the 2017 round of Capacity Screening, it was decided that the secretariat would organize the country reports presented at the fifth meeting in a matrix format and include it in the progress report as an illustration of the different national initiatives. As feasible, information on the Pacific from SPC should be added.

   b) Issues for the attention of the Committee on Statistics:
      - Advocacy for legislation to enable economic statistics development should be emphasized in the report. Showcasing examples of countries that were able to link their national strategies for the development of statistics with RPES implementation may be a good strategy.
- Coordination among development partners in terms of programme scope and technical cooperation should also be discussed in the report.
- Based on the experiences shared at the APES seminar, the report should acknowledge the need to make great use of administrative data for economic statistics. Statistical business registers have a central role to play in integrating data from various sources and this should be highlighted in the report.
- Establishment of Task Forces and respective work plans that together comprise the overall work plan of the Steering Group.

c) Issues for action by the Committee on Statistics: Based on their discussion on economic statistics and the SDGs, the Steering Group pointed to the need for further investigation, illustration and communication of statistics capacity as a basis for monitoring progress towards SDGs indicators. This is an important issue for action by the leaders of national statistical systems, i.e., the members of the Committee on Statistics, towards leveraging the 2030 Agenda for increased attention to and investment in official statistics.

Follow-up actions

24. The secretariat to seek contribution from SPC in drafting the report.

25. The secretariat to circulate the draft report to the Steering Group for comments prior to finalization by early September 2016.

Leadership and functioning of the Steering Group

Decisions

26. The Steering Group selected five co-Chairs from Australia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan and Singapore, respectively, to constitute the collective leadership of the SGRPES.

27. Each co-Chair will lead a task force going forward. The title and terms of reference of each task force to be finally decided by the collective leadership of the Steering Group, taking into due account discussions and decisions made at the fifth meeting of the Steering Group, as captured in the present report.

28. The work plans proposed by the different task forces will be the basis for the work programme for the Steering Group until its sixth meeting (tentatively scheduled to be held in May 2017).

6 The updated list of SGRPES members is available at http://www.unescap.org/resources/members-steering-group-regional-programme-economic-statistics
29. The effectiveness of the leadership arrangement described in the above paragraphs would be reviewed by the Steering Group at its sixth meeting, for decision to be made on its continuation.

30. The Steering Group expressed its appreciation to the firm and visionary leadership provided by the outgoing Chair, Mr. Jeff Cope.

**Follow-up actions**

31. The secretariat to organize and facilitate virtual discussions with the Co-chairs to establish the task forces.
# Annex I. Meeting Agenda

## FIFTH MEETING OF THE STEERING GROUP FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Bangkok, 5-6 May 2016  
UNCC Meeting Room A  
Provisional Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter/Facilitator</th>
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| **13:15 – 13:25** | Opening remarks                                                       | Mr Jeff Cope  
Principal Economic Statistician, Statistics New Zealand  
Chair of SGRPES  
Ms Margarita Guerrero  
Director  
Statistics Division, ESCAP |
| **13:25 – 13:35** | Agenda and the expected outcomes of the fifth meeting of SGRPES       | Ms Badamtsetseg Batjargal  
Senior Vice Chairperson,  
National Statistical Office of Mongolia  
Co-Chair of SGRPES |
|               | Background documents: Concept note and the annotated programme for the fifth meeting and the report of the fourth meeting of the SGRPES |                                                                                       |
Senior Vice Chairperson,  
National Statistical Office of Mongolia  
Co-Chair of SGRPES |
|               | Discussion by Steering Group members                                  |                                                                                       |
| **13:55 – 15:30** | Review implementation of the RPES at the national level                | Maldives, Cambodia and Russian Federation (TBD)  
All other SGRPES members  
(Each country will be given not more than 10 minutes on the floor). |
|               | a) Selected country presentations on RPES implementation               |                                                                                       |
|               |  b) Tour de table                                                      |                                                                                       |
|               | Background documents: Country Questions to gather national implementation information |                                                                                       |

Chaired by Mr Jeff Cope
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter/Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00 – 10:00</td>
<td><strong>Proposed improvements to the Capacity Screening tool</strong>&lt;br&gt;Presentation and discussion by Steering Group members&lt;br&gt;Background document: Capacity Screening review done by the Task Force composed of New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore and SPC</td>
<td>Ms Suzanne Wong&lt;br&gt;Deputy Director, Economic Accounts Division, Department of Statistics, Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45</td>
<td><strong>Review of economic statistics development priorities in Asia-Pacific</strong>&lt;br&gt;Updates by the development partners</td>
<td>ADB, DFID, ESCAP, FAO&lt;br&gt;Chaired by Ms Badamtsetseg Batjargal</td>
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<td>10:45 – 11:00</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td><strong>Review of economic statistics development priorities in Asia-Pacific</strong>&lt;br&gt;Updates by the development partners</td>
<td>ILO, SPC, UNSD&lt;br&gt;Chaired by Ms Badamtsetseg Batjargal</td>
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<td>11:45 – 13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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**Economic statistics development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter/Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:30</td>
<td><strong>Report of the Trade Focal Area on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics in Asia and the Pacific</strong></td>
<td>Ms Mia Mikic&lt;br&gt;Chief, Trade Policy and Analysis Section, ESCAP Trade, Investment and Innovation Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:00</td>
<td><strong>The linkages between economic statistics development and SDG monitoring in Asia-Pacific</strong>&lt;br&gt;Background document: Discussion paper on the linkages between economic statistics development and SDGs</td>
<td>Ms Rikke Munk Hansen&lt;br&gt;Chief, Economic and Environment Statistics Section, ESCAP Statistics Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Presenter</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>Report of the SGRPES to the fifth session of the Committee on Statistics</td>
<td>Ms Badamsetseg Batjargal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion by Steering Group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30 – 14:45</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:45 – 15:45</td>
<td>Function of the Steering Group</td>
<td>Mr Jeff Cope</td>
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<td>- Roles and responsibilities of SGRPES</td>
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<td>- Review of the SGRPES membership due to changes in representation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion by Steering Group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:45 – 15:55</td>
<td>Closing remarks</td>
<td>Ms Rikke Munk Hansen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex II. List of participants

MEMBERS

AUSTRALIA

Mr Jonathon Khoo, Director, Public Finance, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Belconnen,

BANGLADESH

Mr Mohammad Abdul Wazed, Director General, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka

CAMBODIA

Mr Sovorlak Khin, Deputy Director General, National Institute of Statistics, Phnom Penh
Mr Chettra Keo, Director, National Accounts Department, National Institute of Statistics, Phnom Penh

CHINA

Ms Ping Wang, Director, Division of Statistical Methodology, National Bureau of Statistics, Beijing

INDIA

Mr Rajesh Sharma, Director, Economic Statistics Division, Central Statistics Office, New Delhi
Mr Ajit Ratnakar Joshi, Adviser, Dept. of Statistics and Information Management, Reserve Bank of India, Mumbai

INDONESIA

Mr Adi Lumaksono, Deputy Chief Statistician for Production Statistics, Statistics Indonesia-BPS, Jakarta

JAPAN

Mr Makoto Shimizu, Director-General, Statistical Research and Training Institute, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Tokyo
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr Thipsavanh Intharack, Acting Director General, Department of Economic Statistics, Lao Statistics Bureau, Vientiane

MALAYSIA

Mr Fazrul Azlan Othman, Senior Deputy Director, National Accounts Statistical Division, Department of Statistics Malaysia, Putrajaya

MALDIVES

Ms Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Male'

MONGOLIA

Ms Badamtsetseg Batjargal, Director of Integrated Policy and Cooperation Department, National Registration and Statistics Office, Ulaanbaatar

Ms Bayarmaa Baatarsuren, Director of National Account Division, National Registration and Statistics Office, Ulaanbaatar

NEW ZEALAND

Mr Jeff Cope, Principal Economic Statistician, Statistics New Zealand, Christchurch

PAKISTAN

Mr Bahrawar Jan, Deputy Director General, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Mr Roko Koloma Vanua, National Statistician, National Statistical Office, Port Moresby

Mr Tony Waisa, Head Economic Statistics Division, National Statistical Office, Port Moresby

Mr Taunao Vai, Consultant, National Statistical Office, Port Moresby

PHILIPPINES

Mr Romeo Recide, Deputy National Statistician, Philippine Statistics Authority, Quezon City

Mr Reynor Imperial, Director, Philippine Statistics Authority, Quezon City
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr Kwon Soon Moon, Director, Statistics Korea, Daejeon

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr Andrey Tatarinov, Director, Department of National Accounts, Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), Moscow

Mr Ilya Matyushov, Deputy Director, Department of Foreign Statistics and International Cooperation, Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), Moscow

SAMOA

Mr Aliielua Salani, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia

SINGAPORE

Ms Suzanne Sook Han Wong, Deputy Director, Economic Accounts Division, Singapore Department of Statistics, Singapore

TURKEY

Ms Aycan Ozek, Senior Expert, Monetary and Financial Statistics Division, Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey, Ankara

VIET NAM

Mr Quang Vinh Pham, Deputy Director General, General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, Hanoi

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

HONG KONG, CHINA

Mr Parmod K Sharma, Senior Statistician, Sectoral Economic Statistics Branch (1), Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong

Ms Clora Chan, Senior Statistician, National Income Branch (2), Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)
Mr Benson Sim, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), DESA, New York

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)
Ms Sangita Dubey, Senior Statistician, Economic Statistics, FAO, Rome
Mr Mukesh Srivastava, Senior Statistician, FAO, Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)
Mr Tite Habiyakare, Senior Statistician, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO, Bangkok

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)
Mr Mahinthan Joseph Mariasingham, Statistician and Project Officer, ADB, Manila

PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)
Ms Nilima Lal, Economic Statistician, Statistics for Development Division, SPC, Noumea
Mr Rens Hendriks, Economic Statistician, Statistics for Development Division, SPC, Noumea

OTHER ENTITY
DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID)
Mr Craig Irwin, Statistician, United Kingdom Department for International Development, DfID, Dhaka
SECRETARIAT

Ms Margarita Guerrero Director, Statistics Division (SD)
Ms Rikke Munk Hansen Chief, Economic and Environment Statistics Section (EES), SD
Mr Yanhong Zhang Chief, Population and Social Statistics Section (PSS), SD
Mr Christopher Ryan Regional Advisor on Statistics, Office of the Chief, SD
Mr Eric Hermouet Statistician, Statistical Data Management Unit, Office of the Chief, SD
Ms Zeynep Orhun Statistician, EES, SD
Mr Marko Javorsek Associate Statistician, EES, SD
Ms Olga Shipina Consultant, EES, SD
Ms Nixie Mabanag Abarquez Statistics Assistant, EES, SD
Ms Jingyi Xie Team Assistant, EES, SD
Ms Giorgia Menta Intern, EES, SD
Ms Mia Mikic Chief, Trade Policy and Analysis Section, Trade and Investment Division

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (SIAP)

Mr Alick Mjuma Nyasulu Statistician/Lecturer, SIAP, Chiba, Japan
Annex III. Results of the meeting evaluation

FIFTH MEETING OF THE STEERING GROUP FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON ECONOMIC STATISTICS
BANGKOK 5-6 MAY 2016

EVALUATION FORM

To help us assess the effectiveness of this meeting and improve in the future, please complete and return this questionnaire. Thank you.

I. Organization of meeting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Too short</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Too long</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Duration of the meeting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

II. Content of the meeting:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please provide your comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The contribution of future Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics (APES) Week to RPES implementation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sharing countries’ experiences, information and perspective is good. It is vital for the validation of the practices observed in countries, as well as encouraging or inspiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review implementation of the RPES at the national level – including the Tour de Table</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>The review done by countries provided updates on where countries are now in terms of the RPES implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed improvements to the Capacity Screening tool</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>This is important to update countries’ progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of economic statistics development priorities in Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Useful and comprehensive updates from development partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the Trade Focal Area on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics in Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The linkages between economic statistics development and SDG monitoring in</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recognized the importance of SDGs but need further focus, consultation and discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia-Pacific</td>
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<td>Report of the SGRPES to the fifth session of the Committee of Statistics</td>
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<td>Roles and responsibilities of SGRPES/Review of the SGRPES membership due to changes in representation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Are you able to apply the knowledge gained from the meeting when you are back to your respective offices? 22.
   - The country experiences, and inputs from the development partners including ESCAP are useful. With that in mind, will review priorities and inform government.

5. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the improvement of this meeting?
   - Encourage participants to submit presentations earlier on so others can come well-prepared.
   - The meeting duration should be made longer.
   - Senior level management should be made focal point in the Steering Group, if possible.
   - Add 2 or 3 small Pacific island states in the Steering Group.