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Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community**Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community****Note by the secretariat*****Summary*

The present document contains a proposed collective vision and framework for collective action in the Asia Pacific region to advance official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, developed under the guidance of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics. The present document benefitted from regional (www.unescap.org/events/asia-pacific-conference-transforming-official-statistics-implementation-2030-agenda) and sub-regional discussions and consultations (E/ESCAP/CST(5)/INF/4). Subject to further intergovernmental review, the vision and framework are expected to form an integral part of the regional roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

The vision communicates the shared level of ambition to the year 2030. The framework translates the vision into collective action on priority areas that include advocacy, investment, user engagement and enabling of the production and use of integrated statistics through methodological work, modernization of business processes and skills strengthening.

The Committee is invited to review the proposed collective vision and express its views, including on the suitability of the vision to supersede the existing 2020 goals of the Committee set at its second session. The Committee is also invited to review the framework for action, including its principles for collaboration, proposed action areas, objectives and implementation mechanism, and to provide guidance on priorities and issues that need further consideration.

The Committee is invited to endorse the collective vision and framework for action that will serve as its guide for strengthening statistical capacity in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Asia-Pacific region.

* E/ESCAP/CST(5)/L.1.

** The present note was submitted late owing to the need for further consultation on the report contents among the implementing partners. It is being issued without formal editing.

I. Advancing official statistics is needed to transform our world

A. Why we need to act NOW

1. “Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹ sets a high level of ambition for progress on a broad scope of development issues. The Agenda recognizes poverty as the greatest global challenge, with “leaving no one behind” as central to its implementation through promoting inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing social inclusion.

2. Governments have committed to systematically monitor, follow-up and review the implementation of the Agenda to support accountability to their citizens. Towards this end, Governments stressed the significant role of quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data as means of implementation. Recognizing underlying methodological and capacity gaps of their statistical systems, they committed to addressing systemic issues on data, monitoring and accountability as reflected in SDGs Targets 17.18 and 17.19.

3. Statistics utilized as a scientific and objective basis for evidence of progress, according to the 2030 Agenda, is a key driver to achieving sustainable development. Objective judgment on whether or not development has left no one behind is highly related to meeting targets 17.18 and 17.19 of the Agenda. This onus placed by Agenda 2030 on official statistics to be a provider of key services in aid of inclusive development understandably have given rise to apprehensions: *Can we live up to the high expectations? Can we meet the added demand for statistical services and products?*

4. In the same breath, recognition by Agenda 2030 of statistical development as a development issue is highly welcomed by the statistical community, as both a challenge and opportunity: *How will we look in the increased limelight? How do we leverage the attention to advance official statistics for development?*

5. To transform our world in the next 15 years, statistical systems need to be transformed as well. Both perspectives and their implications— *onus and recognition*— are key reasons for acting NOW to transform official statistical systems.

B. Why we need to act collectively

6. National policies and related initiatives to implement the multi-dimensional SDGs should be guided by knowledge of the complex interactions among planet, people and the economy. Timely and reliable statistics of high quality that integrate and are coherent across the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of development are required for such knowledge generation. And national statistical systems need to be fully capable, mandated and empowered to introduce innovative and effective statistical products and services and to communicate their statistical substance.

7. Although capacities vary widely, at the outset of the 2030 Agenda, no national statistical system can claim that it is at the needed level or strength

¹ General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1.

of being enabled and empowered to lead development of and to deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services for the currently identified and evolving statistical requirements of Agenda 2030. The rationale behind the three-tiered system for classifying proposed indicators for monitoring achievement of the SDGs at the global level adapted by the IAEG-SDGs² reflects the universality of challenges for fulfilling statistical requirements.

8. In the Asia-Pacific region, a large number of national statistical systems in the Asia-Pacific region continue to struggle with producing and disseminating basic ranges of economic, environmental and social statistics; a fact well-recognized and reflected in the 2020 goals set by the Committee in 2010 and endorsed by the Commission in 2011 through resolution 67/11.

9. The Committee established a number of expert groups to implement the 2020 goals, which resulted in four major regional capacity development initiatives: Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics, Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, and Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics.³

10. These regional programmes and action plans already recognized the need for taking collective actions and member states have benefitted from those that have been rolled out, such as the observance of the *Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024)*⁴ and the *Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week*⁵ and the regional implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics,⁶ to name a few.

11. The multi-dimensional nature of the 2030 Agenda sets new requirements and new challenges for national statistical systems. The Agenda itself has recognized it and the various national, regional and global assessments and gap analyses that have been undertaken by member States themselves, ESCAP^{7,8}, as well as various United Nations specialised agencies and civil society organizations confirm that in the region, challenges abound. The need for statistics that can support integrated planning and analysis across the economic, social and environmental development pillars and the highlighted role of statistics in ensuring transparency and accountability call for a new perspective and configuration of the functions and services that national statistical systems should be enabled and empowered to provide.

12. The need to act NOW is heightened by the urgency of addressing these challenges through transforming organizations, processes and people. The evidence from implementing the global plans of action and the ESCAP

² <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-04/Updated%20Tier%20Classification%20of%20SDG%20Indicators%2010-11-16.pdf>.

³ Refer to Annex I for an overview of current initiatives under the auspices of the Committee on Statistics.

⁴ Refer to E/ESCAP/CST(5)/3.

⁵ Refer to E/ESCAP/CST(5)/2.

⁶ Refer to E/ESCAP/CST(5)/6.

⁷ “Considerations in strengthening national statistical capacity and readiness for monitoring the SDGs in SPECA member states”
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/SPECA/documents/ecf/2016/Session_III_Background_paper_English.pdf.

⁸ Refer to E/ESCAP/CST(5)/INF/4.

regional initiatives demonstrate that much can be gained from working together—that multi-stakeholder collaboration is an effective approach to accelerating methodological work, improving quality, generating innovative and flexible solutions, and advocating for the required investments to be made through peer-to-peer exchange, pooling of expertise and engaging decision-makers to secure the required financial and institutional support.

13. Taking collective actions covers the breadth and depth of capacity-building— from the inception stage of developing a solution to a problem, to making a business-case, to modalities of implementation (complementation, collaboration and coordination) and to mechanisms for triggering and facilitating these actions. Specifically, we benefit from taking collective action because the business of official statistics has some characteristics that make collaboration particularly attractive – and particularly necessary:

- **One community of public service providers:** National statistical systems in different countries, each embedded in their unique national, political, historical and institutional setting serve similar societal purpose and function, and are expected to provide similar statistical services; this provides a good basis for collaboration, for example on the design and piloting of transformational business models for national statistical systems, or on the joint development or sharing of supporting ICT solutions;

- **Expansion of peer network:** Official statistics are often produced by a small number of institutions in a country; this limits in-country peer-to-peer exchange of lessons, for example on the application of new technology, methodology or other statistical standards;

- **Trans-boundary development issues:** Many statistics on trans-boundary development issues (such as climate change, haze pollution, trade and investment, migration, etc.) are compiled on the basis of national statistics. The resulting statistics are only meaningful if the underlying inputs are coherent, i.e. compiled in adherence to shared statistical standards.

C. Towards a collective vision and framework for transformative action

14. The present document articulates a vision to advance official statistics for the SDGs that calls for multi-stakeholder collective action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community. The collective vision and framework for action call for urgent action to address the challenges and grasp the opportunities for sustainable and transformative capacity development for statistics presented by the 2030 Agenda.

15. The vision communicates the shared ambition level. The framework translates the vision into collaborative action to be taken at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

16. The vision and framework were conceptualized under the guidance of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, its Bureau and its subsidiary expert groups, as well as Asia-Pacific members of the IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB⁹. It was consulted and further elaborated during the Asia-Pacific Conference: Transforming Official Statistics for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held in Bangkok in August 2016. Further, a series of technical meetings organized at the sub-regional level, which discussed national SDG readiness and options for integrating the SDG

⁹ High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

framework in national development plans, reviewed and provided recommendations and other inputs to the framework.¹⁰

17. Subject to further intergovernmental review, the vision and framework are expected to be an integral part of the regional roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.¹¹

II. Articulating our collective vision and framework for action

18. Section 1 of the current document provides the context and rationale for the aspirations and actions for transforming official statistics in the next 15 years. The proposed collective vision and commitment to action are articulated in this section.

A. The vision for transformation

19. We, the Asia-Pacific statistical community, comprising leaders of national statistical systems¹² and development partners active in the region,¹³ share the vision that:

... by 2030, national statistical systems are enabled and empowered to lead development of and to deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services for urgently needed and evolving statistical requirements of Agenda 2030.

20. Being enabled and empowered to meet both urgent and evolving statistical requirements means institutional transformation into learning organizations¹⁴. A transformed national statistical system means that:

- **Skills base** of staff in statistical institutions transcend traditional disciplines;
- Statistical organizations, through modernized **statistical business processes**, are purveyors of information in the era of big data;
- **Legal and institutional structures** firmly support the application of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in guiding statistical management and development in a changing environment of increased demands, new data sources and complex uses of statistics;
- **Relationships with users** of statistical products and services are recast with the clients at the centre.

¹⁰ The outcomes of the sub-regional consultations are reflected in a separate document E/ESCAP/CST(5)/INF/4.

¹¹ ESCAP Commission resolution 72/6 requests the secretariat to “support the process to define a regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda,” pursuant to the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD). The proposed roadmap will be considered by the APFSD at its 2017 session, which is tentatively scheduled to be held in Bangkok from 29-30 March 2017.

¹² Represented by the members of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

¹³ See Annex IV for a list of bilateral, subregional, regional and international agencies and organizations that have committed to the collective vision and framework for action.

¹⁴ Original concept defined by Peter Senge. Definitions: organization that facilitates the **learning** of its members and continuously transforms itself; organization that acquires knowledge and innovates fast enough to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

21. Fundamentally, it means transformation of our understanding of what the **core business of official statistics** is: from producers of time series and tables to providers of statistical products and services that are more directly tailored to the needs of users.

22. We commit to attain this transformative vision.

B. Talking collective action to accelerate transformation

23. We, the leaders of the national statistical systems and partners for statistics development in Asia and the Pacific bring forward and maintain the momentum of ongoing commitments towards transformative action. We recognize that the 2030 Agenda requires added emphasis on advocacy, investment, user engagement and enabling the production and use of integrated statistics through methodological work and skills strengthening. We believe that:

... to attain our collective vision for transformation, we need to take collective actions that will accelerate the needed transformation of the organizations, processes and people comprising national statistical systems.

24. We agree to focus our collaborative efforts on the following action areas:¹⁵

- Action area A: Engaging users and investing in statistics
- Action area B: Assuring quality and instilling trust in statistics
- Action area C: Integrated statistics for integrated analysis
- Action area D: Modernizing statistical business processes
- Action area E: Having requisite skills set

III. Framework for action: Principles for collective action

25. The components of the framework of action articulated in this document are:

- Five action areas
- For each action area, objectives that describe what the desired transformation looks like by 2030
 - For each objective, a set of (indicative) regional resources--outputs produced through collective action for supporting national statistical system initiatives for transformation
 - For each action area, prospective delivery mechanisms for production of regional resources

26. Collective actions, in this framework of action, are those that involve multi-stakeholder engagement characterized by complementation, collaboration and coordination (refer to para 14) to produce regional resources. Collective actions would add value to ongoing and prospective national actions to hasten transformation of the relevant building blocks of the national statistical system in the form and substance called for by the vision. While building on existing commitments to statistics development at national, sub-regional,

¹⁵ See Annex 1 for an elaboration of the content of each action.

regional and global levels, these will serve as springboards for creating resources, designing activities and delivery mechanisms to attain the vision. These principles are further elaborated below.

A. Building on existing regional commitments

27. *The present collective vision and framework for action integrates a realigned and sharpened focus of existing collaborative initiatives towards accelerating progress in meeting the demands arising from the 2030 Agenda.*

28. As mentioned in paras 8 and 9 of the current document, the Committee on Statistics in 2010 set two collective goals for strengthening statistical capacity in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020 and established four major regional capacity development initiatives to support their achievement.

29. In 2015, at its fourth session, the Committee reviewed progress towards its goals and considered needs for adjustments. The Committee noted that the initiatives shared a number of elements that were not specific to any domain and could be effectively pursued through leveraging resources across the regional initiatives. The Committee also noted that aligning the programmes to key demands arising from the 2030 Agenda statistical requirements was necessary, while recognizing the continued relevance and even greater urgency of initiatives to strengthen capacity for producing and disseminating basic underlying statistics of appropriate quality. As a result of this analysis, the Committee decided that the existing regional initiatives should continue, adjusted as necessary to reflect the 2030 Agenda and address the above cross-cutting issues effectively.

B. Building on national priorities and existing initiatives

30. *The action areas and objectives included in the proposed collective vision and framework represent priorities and objectives for regional collaboration; they have been identified by the leaders of national statistical systems of countries in the Asia-Pacific region on the basis of their particular importance and value-addition to national efforts to respond to statistical demands arising from national development plans and the 2030 Agenda.*

31. The collective vision will be achieved through a mix of action at the national level and collaborative activities involving stakeholders at all levels. The supporting activities aim to support and accelerate national progress and should thus build on past and ongoing initiatives by national statistical systems to strengthen their products and services and the supporting organizational, institutional and information management environment.

32. Many of these national actions and processes are already being supported by collectively conceptualized, tested and produced tools, foremost of which are the national strategies for the development of statistics, tools for assessments (global assessments and peer reviews, for example), national quality assurance frameworks and recently, a generic statistics law¹⁶. Countries have benefitted from exchange of experiences in the establishment of system-wide as well as sector-specific coordination mechanisms and the establishment of statistical councils as regular forums to engage with key users for increased relevance. Most recently, many national statistical

¹⁶ The Conference of the European Statisticians endorsed in its 64th session in 2016 the Generic Law on Official Statistics.
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/ECE_CES_2016_8-1601555E.pdf.

systems are actively involved in efforts to localize the SDGs and develop national SDG monitoring frameworks.

33. To have the desired transformative effect, the areas for action laid out in the present document require national processes to be driven and to progress under the leadership of the Chief Statisticians, who are the leaders of the national statistical systems in the region. While relevant combinations of approaches and focus will vary depending on individual country strengths, challenges and priorities, the transformation of each national statistical system would entail action across all the building blocks of the statistical system, as outlined in Annex II.

34. Considering the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind, it is of particular importance that sub-national statistical institutions be fully involved and provided the opportunity to influence the direction of transformation efforts and contribute to their implementation.

C. Employing multiple implementation modalities

35. The proposed framework for action recognizes that particularly the less developed statistical systems of the region will require considerable support to advance their official statistics in the direction of the collective vision. The framework highlights the importance of multiple implementation modalities such as combinations of country-to-country exchange of expertise and experience, peer reviews, technical support, advisory services and training.

IV. Framework for action: Action areas, objectives and outputs

36. The proposed framework for action aims to accelerate transformation of national statistical systems by emphasizing and focusing on five main areas. (An overview of the areas is provided in Annex III.) The proposal emphasizes that the transformation of national statistical systems would entail transformative action across all the building blocks of the statistical system. Although presented separately, the actions have impacts on multiple components. Thus, the framework for action is to be utilized to formulate a transformative agenda for a specific national statistical system, depending on its country-specific context, challenges and priorities.

37. The proposed objectives, indicative collective outputs and prospective delivery mechanisms are detailed below.

A. Action area A: Engaging users and investing in statistics

At your service! ... but no free lunch

38. Statistics produced by a national statistical system should be uniquely branded and recognized by the public as official statistics, their value must be commonly understood, and they should be used widely—first and foremost by Governments for development planning, prioritization and policy and decision-making.

39. The response by Governments to the 2030 Agenda so far has included reviews of national development strategies, including mapping of national development goals, targets, and indicators to the SDGs. This exercise is the starting point of the systematic follow-up and review (FUR) process for Agenda 2030. The essential role of statistics in the FUR process facilitates engagement of users and producers of statistics in identifying data and capacity gaps and target population groups that can inform data disaggregation strategies.

40. These engagements provide opportunities to illustrate the value of official statistics and to build mutual trust. Chief statisticians have more opportunities to engage with high-level decision-makers to ensure that national statistical systems are responsive to the demands of users. With mutual trust and joint understanding of the value of statistics, chief statisticians have a favourable environment for communicating and advocating the need for resources that match the demands of users and enables statistical systems to meet their needs, preparing an investment plan and garnering policy support and action for statistics development.

Action area A: 2030 objectives

41. Collective actions in action area A will be geared towards achieving the following objectives:

Action area A, objective 1: National statistical systems are responsive to the needs of users, including those arising from the 2030 Agenda

Action area A, objective 2: Investments in national statistical systems match the requirements for meeting demands and needs of users

Action area A: Indicative list of regional resources

42. The following indicative list of resources may be developed and/or promoted collaboratively, to support respective national efforts to achieve the objectives for action area A:

In support of objective 1

- Guidelines on the use of data for national SDGs progress report preparation, including statistical analyses and methodologies on progress assessment;
- Knowledge and data platform on the localization of the SDGs for national progress reporting;
- Toolkit for engaging different groups of users of official statistics (various levels of Government, the business sector, civil society, academia, etc.). Illustrative content: Documented experiences, lessons learned and good practices on user engagement; User satisfaction survey tool; Guidelines and other tools for improving statistical literacy;
- Guidelines on data dissemination for increased access to and use of data (including micro-data).

In support of objective 2

- Producing case studies on the value of official statistics;¹⁷
- Fundraising toolkit for national statistical systems, including:
 - Guidelines on the formulation of national investment plans for statistics production and development;

¹⁷ Refer to, for example: www.uncece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/CES_11_-_ENG_G1602756.pdf.

- Technical guidance on estimating the financial resources required to produce a basic range of population, economic, social and environment statistics for monitoring progress towards national and international development goals, including the SDGs;
- National case studies on the costs of producing and disseminating core statistical products and services, as well as options of cost recovery for statistical products and services;
- Documented national experiences and cost-benefit analysis of increasing investments in the national statistical system.

Action area A: Prospective delivery mechanisms

43. The following stakeholder groups, forums and mechanisms already exist at the regional level and could be activated for the development and application of the above-mentioned resources to engage users and increase investment in statistics:

- The Thematic Working Group on Statistics under the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Asia and the Pacific (objectives of the Working Group includes support to SDGs monitoring at the national level)
- The Partnership for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific (the wide membership of the Partnership can broaden advocacy and user engagement to multiple sector ministries of Governments across the region)
- The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade in Asia and the Pacific, 2015-2024 (platform for championing registration and vital statistics for leaving no one behind and for achieving SDG 16)
- SIAP Management Seminars (for strategic dialogue among leaders of national statistical systems on user engagement and resource mobilization)
- The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and its subsidiary sector-focused committees¹⁸ (intergovernmental forums that could be leveraged as platforms for engagement with users of statistics)
- The Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (for engagement and advocacy vis-à-vis high-level Government users of SDGs statistics)

B. Action area B: Assuring quality and instilling trust in statistics

Trusting the numbers

44. For official statistics to be used and sufficient resources to be secured, their quality has to be trusted by the public. A central reference for driving related improvements is the Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics, recognized by all countries through General Assembly resolution 68/261.

45. Legal frameworks that accord coordination authority and responsibility to the national statistical office and national strategies for the development of official statistics are tools and prerequisites for driving

¹⁸ The conference structure of the Commission includes nine sector-specific committees on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development; trade and investment; transport; environment and development; information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation; disaster risk reduction; social development; statistics; and energy (E/ESCAP/RES/71/1).

transformation towards better coordination, system-wide quality assurance frameworks, efficient data flows, and modernized statistical business processes.

46. There is universal agreement that countries should own and lead the implementation of the SDGs, including reviewing their national development strategies and accompanying monitoring frameworks through the lens of the SDGs. National statistical systems have the responsibility to support this process by lending their expertise and building capacity within government institutions tasked with reviewing and revising monitoring frameworks, including indicators. Considering the broad scope of institutions that must be involved in progress monitoring, Chief Statisticians must engage and take centre stage as responsible and capable leaders and coordinators of the national statistical systems.

Action area B: 2030 objectives

47. Collective actions in action area B will be geared towards achieving the following objectives:

Action area B, objective 1: National statistical systems have in place legal frameworks¹⁹ that accord appropriate coordination authority and responsibility to the national statistics office and are fully in line with and facilitates adherence to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Action area B, objective 2: National statistical systems, as the national authority on statistics, formulate and implement comprehensive, system-wide and transformative strategies for the development of statistics for progress monitoring of national development plans and the 2030 Agenda

Action area B, objective 3: National statistical systems have implemented a system-wide quality assurance framework

Action area B: Indicative list of regional resources

48. The following indicative list of resources may be developed and/or promoted collaboratively:

In support of objective 1

- Guidance materials on the formulation or revision of statistics laws. Illustrative content: Generic law on official statistics; Documented good practice legal frameworks, based on country case studies; Country case study analyses on the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks;

¹⁹ The term “legal framework” refers to acts, laws and other regulation that form the legal basis for the operation of national statistical systems; the actual terms used vary from country to country.

Communication and advocacy guidance material to generate support for legal framework reviews and revisions.

In support of objective 2

- Documented good practices on strategic planning for the development of statistics;
- Advocacy materials to support the coordinators of national statistical systems in galvanizing and maintaining support among decision-makers for the successful implementation of national strategies for the development of statistics;
- Guidance material to support the development and implementation of communication strategies for national statistical systems.

In support of objective 3

- Generic quality assurance framework for official statistics;
- Guidance material on the implementation of quality assurance frameworks.

Action area B: Prospective delivery mechanisms

49. The following stakeholder groups, forums and mechanisms already exist at the regional level and could be activated for the development and application of the above-mentioned resources for assuring quality and instilling trust in statistics:

- Partnership for Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific (objectives of the Partnership include strengthening the leadership and coordination role of the NSO);
- The ESCAP Resource Facility (supporting national studies for the improvement of the quality of economic statistics; options for expanding the Facility beyond economic statistics could be considered);
- Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week (a platform for sharing documented country experiences on quality assurance of economic statistics);
- SIAP Management Seminars (for peer exchange and learning among leaders of national statistical systems on strategic planning, communication and assurance of the quality of statistical products and services);
- APFSD (for engagement and awareness-raising on legislative and institutional imperatives for production and dissemination of official statistics for the SDGs).

C. Action area C: Integrated statistics for integrated analysis

Breaking down the pillars

50. To provide timely products and services that respond to the needs of users, national statistical systems need to accelerate their capacity to integrate data sources and establish integrated production and reporting systems. This is especially central to meet the need for integrated analysis of social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. These would call for innovative thinking particularly on the use of data sources that are ‘new’ to official statistics.

51. Implementation of national programmes for integrated statistics entails use of technology and innovation as well as improvement of institutional environment and data infrastructure. Internationally agreed frameworks for the production of integrated statistics (such as the SNA and the SEEA) should be the foundations of the production processes to assure consistency and coherence of the statistics upon which indicators are calculated.

Action area C: 2030 objectives

52. Collective actions in action area C will be geared towards achieving the following objectives:

Action area C, objective 1: An integrated statistical measurement framework for SDGs has been developed

Action area C, objective 2: National statistical systems integrate data from multiple sources in a coherent and consistent manner for the production of statistical products that support integrated analysis of sustainable development issues

Action area C: Indicative list of regional resources

53. The development of an integrated measurement framework for SDGs statistics would greatly facilitate integration efforts by national statistical systems. While such methodological guidance would be developed in reference to global SDGs monitoring, the proposed framework for action identifies the need for regional collaboration to address the localization of the SDGs, including providing ground analysis and research to contribute and complement global efforts.

54. Taking the above into account, the following indicative list of resources, to be developed collaboratively, will support respective national efforts to achieve the two above objectives:

- Statistical measurement framework for SDGs: indicative supporting activities-- Analyses of linkages of the SDGs indicators with existing measurement frameworks (review of existing guidelines and frameworks, identification of gaps); Analysis and recommendations on possible approaches to ensuring coherence among indicators from diverse domains;

- Practical guidelines for utilising 'new' data (e.g., administrative data, Big Data, spatial data, environmental monitoring data) for use for statistical purposes, through compilation, integration and testing of possible approaches on real-life example data sets.

Action Area C: Prospective delivery mechanisms

55. The following stakeholder groups, forums and mechanisms already exist at the regional level and could be activated for the development and application of the above-mentioned resources for supporting production of integrated statistics for integrated analysis:

- The Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;²⁰
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (with the need to strengthen the regional dimension and reach of the partnership).

56. As a relatively new area of focus in the Asia-Pacific region, the creation of the following mechanism is suggested:

- A regional expert group be established to further integrated statistics and innovation (see Section 5 on implementation mechanisms)

D. Action area D: Modernizing statistical business processes

Oiling the wheels

57. Statistical business processes encompass data and information management as well as underlying statistical and technological infrastructure. Their modernization is foundational to facilitate quality management and integration of data sources and for managing data confidentiality issues, including for micro-data. This places statistical business processes at the core of transforming national statistical systems for effective 2030 Agenda implementation and renders their modernization critical to successful implementation of other action areas contained in the present framework.

58. Models such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO) and standards and tools such as the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), and the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) have been developed to support the modernization of statistical business processes.

Action area D: 2030 objectives

59. Collective actions in action area D will be geared towards achieving the following objectives:

Action area D, objective 1: National statistical systems have used GSBPM (or GAMSO) to map their current business processes and have used the resulting findings to identify opportunities and priorities for change

Action area D, objective 2: National statistical systems have implemented modernization tools and concepts, such as SDMX, for strengthened quality, efficiency and effectiveness of statistical information management and exchange

²⁰ An example of a regional group that investigates the linkages and use of disaster management information for official statistics, using national experiences and examples to develop an integrated statistical framework and accompanying guidelines. However, the scope of the work of the Expert Group is limited to the realm of disaster risk reduction, and its term expires in 2018 where final results and findings will be reported to the Commission.

Action area D: Indicative list of regional resources

60. The following indicative list of resources may be developed and/or promoted collaboratively, to support respective national efforts to achieve the objectives:

In support of objective 1

- Compilation of case studies from national statistical systems that have used GSBPM to map their statistical processes, and used the mapping to decide and make changes to official statistics production and dissemination processes;

- Practical guidelines (e.g. decision trees) in using GSBPM at the national level, containing differentiated guidance for various types of geographical, organizational or institutional context (centralized, decentralized, small, large, island, landlocked, federal, unitary, etc.).

61. Some guidance and country case studies already exist, including those generated by the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) of the Conference of European Statisticians.²¹ Further, some countries and international organizations offer technical advice and other support such as peer-to-peer exchanges on the utilization of GSBPM for statistical business process mapping.

In support of objective 2

- A compilation of case studies from national statistical systems that have applied SDMX concepts to the preparation of databases, metadata repositories, etc.²²

- Practical guidelines and support for the application of SDMX concepts, including tailored guidance for national statistical systems that operate in different types of geographical, organizational or institutional context (centralized, decentralized, small, large, island, landlocked, federal, unitary, etc.).

Action area D: Prospective delivery mechanisms

62. The following stakeholder groups, forums and mechanisms already exist at the regional level and could be activated for the production and use of the above-mentioned resources to support modernization of statistical business processes:

- Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week (for sharing documented country experiences on improvement of statistical business processes and statistical infrastructure—also keeping in mind that for the implementation of SDMX principles the domain of economic statistics is more advanced than others)

- SIAP Management Seminars (to exchange senior management experience on business process modernization as part of organizational transformations)

²¹ See for example ECE/CES/2016/9, 10.

²² A number of global resources, including those available at the official site for the SDMX community, exist and expertise is available in a number of international institutions, including the SDMX Sponsor Organisations, as well as in countries that have gained experience with SDMX implementation.

- The Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (an ESCAP sector-specific Committee that provides an intergovernmental platform for deliberation on topics such as open government data, e-governance and modernization of public administration)

63. Shared geographical, institutional, linguistic or other characteristics greatly increase the benefits from collaboration on modernizing business processes; the involvement of sub-regional organizations or mechanisms may therefore be of particular importance to successful implementation of this action area.

64. The Committee in 2012 established the Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Products and Services in Asia and the Pacific (SAB-AP)²³ to support modernization efforts in the region; we also note that such high-level mechanism may not be appropriate for producing the types of resources indicated in the above list. However, several of the other existing regional programmes may provide suitable platforms for the identification and generation of case studies on the practical application of modernization concepts, principles, standards, models and other tools to map and improve statistical business processes.

E. Action area E: Having requisite skills sets

Transforming institutions is transforming people

65. Any organization is only as good as the people who work for it. National statistical offices are consistently placing issues related to human resources at the top of the list when asked to indicate major challenges. In addition to the lack of staff and the challenges to attracting and retaining talent, the need to diversify the traditional skills base in statistical organizations to include expertise on management, communication, coordination, ICT, and data mining are emphasized in the transformative 2030 Agenda. The need for multi-disciplinary expertise is added to the basket in recognition of current inability to produce statistics for integrated policy analysis.

66. The implied human resources challenges of the 2030 Agenda can only be sustainably addressed by national statistical systems that have evolved into learning organizations, fostering innovation and continuous modernization and transformation.

Action area E: 2030 objectives

Action area E, objective 1: Statistical requirements for the 2030 Agenda are supported by appropriate guidance material and training

Action area E, objective 2: The combined skillset of the staff of national statistical systems, together with capable management and sufficiency of human resources enable the continuous generation of statistical products and services required for monitoring of national development plans and the 2030 Agenda

²³ E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17, decision 3/5.

Action area E: Indicative list of regional resources

67. The following indicative list of resources may be developed and/or promoted collaboratively:

In support of objective 1

- Manual on equipping staff in national statistical systems to monitor progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda
- Curriculum and training materials on leadership, change management, and organizational development

In support of objective 2

- Manual on the development of human resources management strategies for national statistical institutions. Illustrative content: Building on best practices from around the region; Addressing recruitment, retention, career development plans, skills frameworks, budget; Considering particular challenges in countries where no proper academic training in statistics is on offer;

- Recommended procedures for undertaking a thorough skills assessment of staff involved in the national statistical system, including a gap analysis on what additional staff resources/skills and organizational staffing pattern may be required;

- Training materials and programmes on utilising new data sources for production of official statistics, involving public, private and not-for-profit actors for more granular, timely and cheaper statistics.

Action area E: Prospective delivery mechanisms

68. The following stakeholder groups, forums and mechanisms already exist at the regional level and could be activated for the implementation of action area E:

- The Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific could be activated for the production and use of the above-mentioned resources to ensure that transformational efforts for 2030 Agenda implementation include skills building and innovations in human resources management.

- Regional policy forums such as the Commission, its sector-specific Committees, and the APFSD, are appropriate platforms for applying new knowledge and skills for engaging in user-producer dialogues for the purpose of advocacy and awareness-raising for increased investment, use and relevance of official statistics.

69. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific of ESCAP, as the only Asia-Pacific wide training institution and the secretariat of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific is well-positioned, with the mandates and considerable assets, for transforming institutions and transforming people.

70. Further, it is noted that country-to-country exchange of expertise is a promising and not fully tapped delivery mechanism for training. For example, out-posting and mentoring initiatives could be facilitated for senior NSS staff development. And partnerships among national statistical offices,

research institutes and universities could be pursued to expand opportunities for learning on the job or to institute academic courses in statistics.

71. Finally, for the development and delivery of training in non-statistical areas, such as communication, negotiation and advocacy, delivery mechanisms external to the statistical community and statistical institutions may be more effective and should be explored.

V. Implementing the framework for action

72. This section presents a proposed governance structure for implementing the framework for action.

A. Governance and coordination

73. The Committee on Statistics will provide oversight and direction on the implementation of the present vision and collective framework.

The Bureau

74. The Bureau will coordinate the implementation of the collective vision and framework for action, on behalf of the Committee. This will entail advice and facilitation of coordinated responses by the existing capacity development initiatives to the multiple cross-cutting and institutional issues included in the framework for action. As a first step, the Bureau will work with representatives from each of the steering groups for existing regional capacity development initiatives (as listed in Annex I) to develop a coordinated approach for achieving the objectives outlined under each of the framework's five action areas.

75. The Bureau will, as appropriate, review its Terms of Reference in accordance with the above responsibilities, ensuring that the composition and working modalities of the Bureau allow it to effectively perform related functions. As part of the review, the composition of the Bureau, including the possible inclusion of representatives from international organizations and donors will be considered. In addition, the assignment of each Bureau member to one or more of the existing regional initiatives, to the extent possible matching her or his expertise and interest, would be considered among possible new working modalities of the Bureau. The adjustment of the TOR is subject to approval by the Committee on Statistics.

B. Mechanisms for implementation

Starting point

76. As the successor to the Committee's 2020 goals, the main mechanisms for regional implementation of the 2030 vision will initially be the existing capacity development initiatives which are overseen by steering groups that comprise member States and international organizations. Subject to guidance and coordination by the Bureau as outlined in the above section, the following steering groups will be responsible for refocusing their respective initiative towards implementing the present framework for action, and to adjust their terms of reference accordingly:

- Steering Group for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- Regional Steering Group on Agricultural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific
- Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific
- Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific

77. These mechanisms will be central to the development, adaptation, application or deployment of the listed resources under each of the five action areas.

78. In addition, the establishment of a new mechanism for the implementation of the strategy to strengthen population and social statistics, which was endorsed by the Committee at its fourth session, is subject to deliberations by the Committee at its present session.²⁴

Consideration of new mechanisms

79. In the course of implementation, systematic reviews of the implementation phase will be carried out. Expected outcomes of such reviews will include the identification for new mechanisms or modifications to existing ones.

80. An early case for review is the Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Products and Services in Asia and the Pacific (SAB-AP) which was established in 2012 to provide high-level advocacy for added momentum for modernizing national statistical services. Difficulties with attracting or identifying regional champions for the cause have resulted in the SAB-AP being dormant for a long period. Bearing in mind also that other existing regional programmes may provide suitable platforms for modernization efforts, it is suggested that this mechanism be recast to directly support action area C, on integrated statistics and innovation.

81. As indicated in para 56, a regional expert group on integrated statistics and innovation could be established. It would draw its multi-disciplinary membership from countries, global, regional and sub-regional organizations, including suitable experts from existing groups. The expert group would function similarly to other existing groups, with priorities guided by the Committee and with regular reporting to the Committee. The expert group would constitute a forum for exchanging latest methodological advances and experiences with applying them, such as the review and compilation of existing guidelines on data integration; review of meta-data and methods for SDGs indicators; case studies of data integration context in national statistical offices; etc. Given the broad range of statistical domains or areas of relevance to the SDGs, a phased approach could be taken with a revolving agenda, possibly starting with topics that relate to the SEEA to take advantage of an existing integrated statistical framework.

²⁴ E/ESCAP/CST(5)/3.

Global and sub-regional mechanisms

82. As recognized under several action areas, sub-regional county groupings or organizations are important anchors for successful implementation of the vision and framework for action, in that they gather countries with some commonalities that facilitate cooperation. Some sub-regional groupings such as ASEAN and SPC also provide an added level of mutual accountability, exemplified by the ACSS Code of Practice²⁵ and the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy. It is suggested that the collective vision and framework for action is implemented in a manner that most effectively support sub-regional statistics development strategies. The present document will be used to solicit commitment and involvement by sub-regional organizations with a mandate on statistics development in the implementation of the collective vision, to the benefit of their respective memberships.

83. Globally, a number of mechanisms support statistics for the 2030 Agenda, not least the Statistical Commission, the HLG-PCCB and the IAEG-SDGs. Action towards implementing our collective vision should influence and contribute to the work of these groups; it is for example expected that the present document will constitute the Asia-Pacific component of the 'Global Action Plan' that is under development within the auspices of the HLG-PCCB.

84. It is also expected that the implementation of the present framework for action will support the downstream implementation and application of tools and other resources that may result from the global work. The continued active involvement in global work by countries in Asia and the Pacific, and information sharing within the region, will be important for related information to be shared for the benefit of the regional at large. Improved relations and exchange between experts from the region who participate in global expert groups, task forces and city groups and the members of the various groups functioning under the Committee is strongly encouraged to strengthen the linkages between global, regional and national efforts for mutual reinforcement.

C. Reporting and review

85. It is proposed that the secretariat works closely with the Bureau to design a monitoring framework for the collective vision, drawing on additional expertise from steering groups and international organizations, as needed. The work would include the content of a monitoring framework (indicators, methodology) as well as its implementation (milestones, data collection, data processing, results dissemination, related responsibilities), considering the potential response burdens for member States and partners. The proposed framework and recommendations for its implementation would be put forward for review and endorsement by the Committee.

86. The monitoring framework should take into account global SDGs targets and indicators related to statistics development, the objectives contained in the present framework for action, earlier Committee proposals and deliberations on the topic,^{26,27} experiences from the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics, earlier and current work to monitor and develop

²⁵ www.asean.org/storage/images/resources/Statistics/2014/Code%20of%20Practice-ADOPTED-CLEAN.pdf.

²⁶ E/ESCAP/CST(3)/3.

²⁷ E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17.

statistics capacity indicators, including those of PARIS21²⁸ and the World Bank,²⁹ as well as specific conditions of member States.

87. Particularly relating to SDGs targets 17.18 and 17.19 on statistical development, the Committee, as a sector-specific forum within the conference structure of the Commission, would be the venue for sharing information and stocktaking progress towards these two SDGs targets on statistics development. The monitoring framework for the collective vision could support this process given both aim to strengthen national statistical systems and thus share the same purposes. .

88. Progress, as evidenced by the results of the monitoring, should be reviewed on a regular basis by the Committee. Further, the Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development would be used as a platform for discussion of progress towards achieving SDGs related to statistics development, as a tool for enhancing user-producer dialogues and strengthening the responsiveness of national statistical systems to policy needs, in line with action area A of the present framework for action.

D. Secretariat

89. The ESCAP secretariat shall continue to perform the functions required to service the Committee and the steering groups established by the Committee, and shall support the Bureau to manage a monitoring framework for the collective vision.

VI. Conclusion

90. The Committee is invited to review and endorse the present collective vision and framework for action, including:

- The collective vision, including that it supersedes the 2020 goals as the Committee's reference for strengthening statistical capacity in support of Agenda 2030;
- The five action areas and their accompanying objectives;
- The three principles for collective action; The proposed implementation mechanisms.

91. The Committee is invited to endorse the following specific proposals contained in the document:

- That the Bureau, within the direction provided by the Committee, is entrusted with coordinating the implementation of the collective vision and framework for action (see paragraph 74);
- That the Bureau will review and adjust its Terms of Reference to enable it to perform this responsibility effectively (see paragraph 75);
- That the Bureau as a first step will work with representatives from each of the steering groups for existing capacity development initiatives to develop a coordinated approach to achieving the objectives outlined under each of the five action areas (see paragraph 76);

²⁸ www.paris21.org/SCBI.

²⁹ <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/>.

- That the SAB-AP be discontinued and replaced with a new expert group on integrated statistics and innovation, with a particular focus on addressing measurement-related issues related to statistical products and services that would facilitate multi-dimensional policy analysis for the 2030 Agenda (see paragraphs 80 and 81);

- That the secretariat works with the Bureau to develop a framework for progress monitoring towards the collective vision, for subsequent endorsement by the Committee (see paragraphs 85-89).

92. The Committee may also wish to provide guidance on priorities or any other issues that need further consideration, such as the roles and contributions of bilateral, subregional and international development organizations in the implementation of the vision.

Annex I

ESCAP Committee on Statistics: Existing capacity development initiatives

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Steering Group</i>	<i>Examples of regional resources/ delivery mechanisms</i>
Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics	Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Set of Economic Statistics ▪ Capacity screening ▪ ESCAP Resource Facility ▪ Quality Assurance Frameworks ▪ Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week
Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics	Regional Steering Group for Agricultural Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National strategic plans for agricultural and rural statistics ▪ Integration ▪ Training
Regional Strategy for Population and Social Statistics	Friends of the Chair group (<i>interim</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Set of Population and Social Statistics ▪ Proposed implementation plan
Regional Framework and Core Set of Gender Statistics and Indicators	<i>None</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Set of Gender Statistics and Indicators ▪ (Draft) Recommendations on strengthening capacity to produce sex-disaggregated statistics for the SDGs
Asia-Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024, with accompanying Regional Action Framework	Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocacy and regional championing ▪ Link to good governance, human rights and good data and statistics (SDG 16 & 17)
Modular and integration-focused approach to strengthening environment statistics	<i>None</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diagnostics tool to determine priorities ▪ Inventory of environmental information ▪ FDES and SEEA as references
Disaster-related statistics	Expert Group on disaster-related Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (Draft) Disaster-related Statistics Framework ▪ (Draft) Guidelines for production and dissemination of disaster-related statistics
Training Coordination	Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics: training resources ▪ Database of experts ▪ Database of regional capacity-building initiatives
Modernization of statistical business processes	Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Products and Services in Asia and the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary objective “to drive and support changes towards the modernization of statistical production and services in Asia-Pacific”
Partner coordination	Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocacy ▪ Coordination

Annex II

The building blocks of national statistical systems^a

<i>Institutional capacity component</i>	<i>Desired State</i>
1. Legal framework	Existence and implementation of a modern statistical law that applies the FPOS
2. Strategic planning	Strategic planning is not solely output-based but incorporates policies and resource requirements and is linked with national development plans
3. Advocacy for the improvement of national statistical systems	Advocacy is intended to galvanize political and financial support to implement a national statistical plan comprising all statistical domains and all producers of official statistics
4. Coordination among agencies of the NSS	Coordination among national agencies involved in the production and dissemination of official statistics is assured through the development and implementation of national plans as well as regional coordination in provision of tools and support
5. Engagement between data users and data producers	Mechanisms to engage users and producers, such as user-producer dialogues are in place
6. Modernization of statistical organizations	Organizations of the NSS use international tools and standards for mapping and rationalizing business processes and building modern IT and metadata infrastructures
7. Quality assurance and dissemination policies	Quality assurance and dissemination policies are put in place
8. Human resources and skills	Subject-matter expertise and technical skills, human resources policies, managerial/leadership, and communication related skills
9. Statistical infrastructure	Statistical infrastructure, including methods and practices, IT, metadata repositories
10. Data sources	Ability to draw on many data sources, from statistical collections, administrative registers and new (non-traditional) sources; data sources are chosen based on quality including timeliness, and cost

^a Adapted from the Strategy for Population and Social Statistics, endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its fourth session (www.unescap.org/resources/developing-national-capacity-population-and-social-statistics-asia-and-pacific-framework-0).

Annex III

Overview of proposed action areas

<i>Action area</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;^a Quality dimension</i>
A At your service! ... but no free lunch	<u>Engaging users and investing in statistics</u> : Alignment of statistics to development policy priorities; engagement in national SDGs coordination mechanisms; user producer dialogue; advocacy for increased investment in statistics; action research on costing statistical products	Relevance, responsiveness, interpretability, resources
B Trusting the numbers	<u>Assuring quality and ensuring trust in statistics</u> : Legal framework; strategic and budget planning; governance and coordination of the national statistical system; dissemination and quality assurance policies and frameworks	Institutional environment
C Breaking down the pillars	<u>Integrated statistics for integrated analysis</u> : Application of SNA/SEEA for SDGs indicator production; ability to integrate and draw on data from multiple sources, including new sources	Relevance, coherence
D Oiling the wheels	<u>Modernization of statistical business processes</u> : Application of GSBPM and GAMS0 frameworks; implementation of related standards and tools (GSIM, CSPA, DDI, SDMX); statistical infrastructure; metadata; IT; national statistical system-wide integrated production line	Coherence, timeliness, cost-effectiveness
E Transforming institutions is transforming people	<u>Having requisite skills sets</u> : Statistical subject-matter expertise, interdisciplinary expertise and related technical skills; managerial and communication skills; staff development and retention strategies	Professionalism

^a A/RES/68/261.

Annex IV

Development partners committed to the collective vision and action framework^a

<i>Partner</i>	<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Expected contribution</i>
...		
...		
ESCAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental • Economic, social and environmental development in Asia and the Pacific • Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development • Servicing the Committee on Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of the implementation of the collective vision and action framework • Facilitation of establishing, servicing and providing technical contributions to related expert groups and other implementation mechanisms • Technical assistance to countries on strengthening national statistical systems • Facilitation of regional exchange of lessons and good practices on statistics • Training coordination and delivery (SIAP)
...		
...		

^a Subsequent to consideration and endorsement by the Committee of the proposed collective vision and framework for action contained in the present document, development partners will be invited to confirm their support and indicate their commitments.