



# Economic and Social Council

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## Statistical Commission

### Forty-eighth session

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Item 4 (m) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for information: follow-up to the policy decisions of  
the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council**

## **Policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission**

### **Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2016/220 and past practices, the Secretary-General is honoured to transmit a report in order to brief the Statistical Commission on the policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Council adopted in 2016, or earlier, that are relevant to its work. The report also indicates the actions that were taken or are proposed by the Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Assembly and the Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

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\* [E/CN.3/2017/1](#).



## **Policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission**

### **I. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

#### **A. Action requested by the General Assembly**

1. In its resolution [70/1](#), the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Under the 2030 Agenda, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives agreed to intensify their efforts to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries and expressed their commitment to developing broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product.

2. Under the 2030 Agenda, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives also envisioned a global indicator framework which would be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and agreed by the Statistical Commission by March 2016. The framework would be adopted thereafter by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Heads of State and Government specified that the framework would be simple yet robust, address all Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including for means of implementation, and preserve the political balance, integration and ambition contained therein.

#### **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat**

3. The Statistical Commission will have before it notes by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators ([E/CN.3/2017/2](#)) and the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([E/CN.3/2017/3](#)).

4. The formation of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group was endorsed by the Statistical Commission in its decision 46/101 ([E/2015/24](#), chap. I.C). The report of the Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators describes the continuing work of the Group, carried out in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, for the implementation of the global indicator framework based on the work programme agreed at the forty-seventh session of the Commission. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group held two physical meetings in 2016, one in Mexico City in March and one in Geneva in November, each attended by close to 200 representatives of countries, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector.

5. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has established a tier system to help implement the indicators in order to realize the full ambitions set out in the 2030 Agenda. The Group has established three working groups: on the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX), on geospatial information, and on interlinkages, and a work stream on data disaggregation. In response to the decision of the Statistical Commission, the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group also offers specific proposals for refinements of current indicators and future reviews of the indicator framework.

6. The report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development describes the continuing work of the High-level Group. The Group held two meetings following the forty-seventh session of the Commission to discuss and develop the global action plan for sustainable development data and prepare the first United Nations World Forum on Sustainable Development Data, which will be held from 15 to 18 January 2017 in Cape Town, South Africa.

## **II. High-level political forum on sustainable development 2016 and 2017**

### **A. Action requested by the General Assembly**

7. Under the 2030 Agenda, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives determined that the follow-up and review at the high-level political forum on sustainable development would be informed by an annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals to be prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the United Nations system, based on the global indicator framework and data produced by national statistical systems and information collected at the regional level. The theme of the high-level political forum held from 11 to 20 July 2016 was “Ensuring that no one is left behind”.

8. In its resolution [70/299](#), the General Assembly reaffirmed that the meetings of the high-level political forum would be informed by an annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals and decided that the theme for the high-level political forum in 2017 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council would be “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world” and that the sets of Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth should be Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14.

### **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division**

9. The Statistical Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/CN.3/2017/4](#)). The report describes the work of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations system, on preparing the first annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals based on the global indicator

framework, as developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

10. The first report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2016/75), which was issued on 3 June 2016, served as an input into the discussions held at the high-level political forum. The report provides a global overview of the current situation regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, on the basis of the latest available data for indicators in the proposed global framework. For most of the indicators presented in the report, values represented regional and/or subregional aggregates. They were calculated from national data collected by international agencies, based on their respective mandates and specialized expertise, from national statistical systems. The national data were often adjusted for international comparability and, where lacking, estimations were made by international agencies.

11. In addition to the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, there was the launch by the Secretary-General, on 19 July 2016, during the ministerial segment of the high-level political forum, of *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016*.<sup>1</sup> The *Report*, which presents data and analysis on Sustainable Development Goals for a wider audience, in a user-friendly format, with charts, infographics and analysis for selected indicators for which data were already available, built upon official data provided by Member States and was the result of collaboration across the entire United Nations system.

12. Besides the two reports described directly above, a statistical annex containing global regional aggregates of the indicators was also released. The two reports represent the first official global efforts to monitor the 2030 Agenda and will serve as a key benchmark throughout the period of implementation of the 2030 Agenda extending over the next 15 years. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* is also presented on an interactive platform on the Statistics Division Sustainable Development Goals indicators website.

### **III. Global geospatial information management**

#### **A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council**

13. In its resolution 2016/27, the Economic and Social Council decided to broaden and strengthen the mandate of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management as the relevant body on geospatial information consisting of government experts. In the same resolution, the Council noted the increasing role and relevance of the Committee of Experts and its acknowledged efforts in streamlining the subsidiary bodies of the Council on geospatial information matters, and requested that the Committee report back to the Council, no later than in five years' time, on the implementation of resolution 2016/27 as well as on its continued efforts to work with the Statistical Commission and with the entire United Nations system, and to integrate geospatial and statistical information systems and, in that

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.I.10.

context, to examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee.

## **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division**

14. The Statistical Commission considered the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information ([E/CN.3/2016/31](#)) at its forty-seventh session and took note of the major outcomes of its second meeting, held in Lisbon on 24 May 2015, and a side event convened on the margins of the fifth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, held in New York from 3 to 7 August 2015. The report also provided information on a consultative meeting of the Expert Group with regard to the review of its work programme and the preparation and formulation of plans for future progress. At the forty-eighth session, the Commission will have before it the report of the Expert Group prepared for consideration at that session ([E/CN.3/2017/9](#)).

## **IV. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**

### **A. Action requested by the General Assembly**

15. Under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/1](#), Heads of State and Government and High Representatives recognized the importance of improved data collection on refugees and migrants, particularly by national authorities, and would enhance international cooperation to that end, including through capacity-building, financial support and technical assistance, and affirmed that refugee and migrant data should be disaggregated by sex and age and include information on regular and irregular flows, the economic impacts of migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, the needs of refugees, migrants and host communities and other issues.

### **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division**

16. In its decision 47/111 ([E/2016/24](#), chap. I.B), which was based on a joint proposal by Statistics Norway, the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Statistical Commission endorsed the recommendation for the establishment of an expert group on refugee statistics. In the same decision, the Commission requested the Expert Group to develop recommendations on refugee statistics, as a reference guide for national and international work concerning asylum statistics, and a refugee statistics compilers manual, as operational instructions on how to collect refugee statistics, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including migration authorities and offices in charge of registration of displaced persons; and also requested that the Expert Group include statistics on internally displaced persons in its future scope of work.

17. The Statistical Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General on demographic statistics (E/CN.3/2017/19). In the annex to that report, it is mentioned that six workshops on migration statistics were or will be organized by the Statistics Division in collaboration with the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat: five were held between November 2014 and December 2016, and one was planned for early 2017. In the report, it is also mentioned that the Statistics Division has joined the Expert Group on Refugee Statistics. The Expert Group, led by Statistics Norway, Eurostat and UNHCR, aims at developing a set of international recommendations on refugee statistics by 2018, as a reference guide for national and international work concerning statistics on refugees and asylum seekers. The Expert Group, which held its first meeting on 7 and 8 November 2016, will conduct a global consultation on the draft recommendations on refugee statistics and submit the recommendations to the Commission for adoption at its forty-ninth session in 2018.

## **V. Inclusive development for persons with disabilities**

### **A. Action requested by the General Assembly**

18. In its resolution [71/165](#) on inclusive development for persons with disabilities, the General Assembly stressed the importance of collecting and analysing reliable data on persons with disabilities following existing guidelines on disability statistics and their updates, encouraged ongoing efforts to improve data collection in order to disaggregate data with regard to persons with disabilities by gender and age, and underlined the need for internationally comparable data to assess progress on development policies that are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

19. In the same resolution, the General Assembly expressed its concern that the lack of high-quality data required to provide viable baselines and measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities posed a significant challenge to effectively monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for persons with disabilities; and that the continuing lack of reliable statistics and data as well as information on the situation of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and global levels contributed to their exclusion in official statistics, presenting an obstacle to achieving development planning and implementation that were inclusive of persons with disabilities.

### **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division**

20. The Statistical Commission will have before it, for discussion, the report of the Secretary-General on social statistics (E/CN.3/2017/11). In the report, it is mentioned that the Statistics Division, with the financial support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia, relaunched its disability statistics programme in May 2015. In collaboration with regional commissions and other relevant regional organizations, the World Health Organization and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, the Statistics Division has organized or will organize six regional meetings on disability

measurement and statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme. Three workshops were held in 2016 and three are scheduled for 2017.

21. The objectives of the regional meetings are to: (a) review and discuss national experiences regarding approaches taken to measuring the population with disabilities during national censuses of the 2010 round, including challenges faced and lessons learned; (b) provide an opportunity to discuss strategies for compilation of data on disability for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) share national experiences among participating countries and facilitate intraregional cooperation aimed at enhancing national capacity in disability measurement and improving the quality of data for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. These regional workshops and other information-gathering exercises will provide input for an expert group meeting in 2017 to revise the *Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics* which was published in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

## **VI. Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world**

### **A. Action requested by the General Assembly**

22. In its resolution 2016/8, the Economic and Social Council encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and all relevant stakeholders to improve data collection, analysis and monitoring to measure progress in advancing equality, social justice and participation for development policy planning, implementation and evaluation, taking regional contexts fully into account, and to share, where appropriate, relevant data and statistics with relevant agencies and bodies within the United Nations system, including the Statistical Commission, through appropriate mechanisms, and underlined the need to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data.

### **B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division**

23. The work of the Statistical Commission on the data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.3/2017/2), social statistics (E/CN.3/2017/11) and governance statistics (E/CN.3/2016/16) is relevant to measuring progress in advancing equality, social justice and participation for development policy planning, implementation and evaluation. The Commission considers these topics on an annual or biennial basis.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics on Special Population Groups, Series Y, No. 10 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 01.XVII.15).