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Background document
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Items for discussion and decision: working methods of the Statistical Commission

Reference Framework for Groups under the Statistical Commission

Prepared by the Bureau of the Statistical Commission

Reference Framework for Groups under the Statistical Commission												
Type of group	Pillar	Statistical domain	Core technical focus ¹	Chair(s)	Members and observers	Membership level	Timeframe	Mandate and outputs	Periodicity of reporting to UNSC	Subgroups	Meeting frequency	Communication and outreach
City group	City groups are expected to work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	City groups focus on methodology in an emerging statistical domain, which primarily involves contributing to advancing methodologies towards the development of statistical standards (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks	City groups are chaired by a Member State	City groups are composed by Member States (mandatory), UN agencies, non-UN agencies, academic institutions and civil society organisations	City groups work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	City groups are long-term and do not have a set duration. However, they are expected to transition into a more structured setting if they wish to carry out activities outside the methodological focus, i.e. capacity development, coordination and data after determining that no other group within the domain can take on these activities.	Mandates of City groups are formulated to address the issues of conceptualization, methodology and instruments in an emerging statistical domain. Their outputs typically feed into standardised tools, methods, measures, frameworks, or any other methodological work. Their outputs are expected to be inputs to other groups' work.	City groups are expected to report to the Commission at least every five years, and should do so jointly with other actors working in the same statistical domain	City groups complement existing processes for the development and adoption of international statistical standards by adapting more nimbly to changing conditions, thus it is preferable that they do not have a heavy substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually)	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact
Friends of the Chair	Friends of the Chair groups may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Friends of the Chair groups focus on coordination , which entails liaising among multiple stakeholders in order to coordinate statistical activities in the relevant domain. Occasionally, Friends of the Chair groups might work as well on methodology , primarily the early stage in the development of a statistical standard or definition, including its revisions and accompanying manuals and	Friends of the Chair groups are chaired by a Member State	Friends of the Chair groups are composed by Member States (mandatory). Observers can include UN agencies and non-UN agencies.	Friends of the Chair groups work at the managerial (strategic) level and are primarily composed by Chief Statisticians	Friends of the Chair groups are short-term and must have a maximum duration of three years. If deemed necessary, they can transition into a more structured setting (either at managerial level-Committee, or at technical level-expert group)	Mandates of Friends of the Chair groups are strategic, particularly if formulated to address coordination issues, but also if focused on methodology. In the latter case, Friends of the Chair groups are generally tasked to conceptualize a roadmap for methodological development in the relevant statistical domain. Their outputs typically lay the groundwork for further methodological work. Friends of the Chair	Friends of the Chair groups are expected to report to the Commission at least every two years	Friends of the Chair groups jump start methodological development or conceive strategies to be put in place, thus it is preferable that they do not have a heavy substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually). Friends of the Chair groups should meet more often, given their short-term nature	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact
Task Force	Task forces may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Task forces focus on methodology , which primarily involves the development of a statistical standard (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks. Occasionally, Task forces might also do data work, which relates to carrying out technical research and development regarding data. Although less encouraged, Task forces might be engaged on capacity	Task forces are chaired by an agency (UN or non-UN)	Task forces are composed by UN agencies and non-UN agencies.	Task forces work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	Task forces are short-term and must have a set duration of three years at most. If deemed necessary, they can transition into a longer-term, technical level, setting in order to continue their work	Mandates of Task forces are detailed and scope-specific, focused on methodology. Task Forces are generally tasked to develop a particular aspect of a statistical standard. Their outputs are typically concrete standards, definitions or norms. Occasionally, their mandate requests to carry out technical work within a limited data universe and to deliver specific data-related documents. Less frequently, Task forces are asked to	Task forces are expected to report to the Commission at least every two years	Task forces deliver specific methodological developments, capacity development activities or data. Depending on the scope of the task, they may have a substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually). Task forces should meet more often, given their short-term nature	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact

Type of group	Pillar	Statistical domain	Core technical focus ¹	Chair(s)	Members and observers	Membership level	Timeframe	Mandate and outputs	Periodicity of reporting to UNSC	Subgroups	Meeting frequency	Communication and outreach
Working Group (incl. Partnership)	Working groups may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Working groups focus on methodology , which primarily involves the development of a statistical standard (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks. Occasionally, Working groups might also do data work, which relates to carrying out technical research and development regarding data. Although less encouraged, Working groups might be	Working groups are chaired by a Member State or an agency (UN or non-UN)	Working groups can be composed by Member States, UN agencies and non-UN agencies.	Working groups work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	Working groups are long-term . If deemed necessary, they may request their disbandment in order to discontinue their work	Mandates of Working groups have a broad related to methodology. Working groups are generally tasked to develop all aspects of a statistical standard. Their outputs are typically standards, or systems of standards, classifications or norms. Occasionally, their mandate requests to carry out technical work on the full spectrum of a data universe and to deliver data management programmes. Less frequently Working	Working groups are expected to report to the Commission at least every three years	Working groups deliver full methodological developments, capacity development programmes or data programmes. Due to the broad scope of the task, they often have a substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually)	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact
Expert Group	Expert groups may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Expert groups focus on methodology , which primarily involves the development of a statistical standard (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks	Expert groups are chaired by a Member State	Expert groups are composed by Member States (mandatory). Observers can include UN agencies and non-UN agencies.	Expert groups work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	Expert groups are medium-term and must have a set duration of five years at most. If deemed necessary, they can transition into a longer-term, technical level, setting in order to continue their work	Mandates of Expert groups are formulated to address the issues of conceptualization and revision of methodology, frameworks, standards and instruments in the relevant statistical domain. Their outputs are typically manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines, and often make use of methodological outputs produced by other groups.	Expert groups are expected to report to the Commission at least every three years	Expert groups deliver full methodological developments or products. Due to the depth of the task, they often have a substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually)	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact
Committee (incl. High-level Group)	Committees may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Committees focus on coordination and strategic vision, which entails liaising among multiple stakeholders in order to coordinate statistical activities in the relevant domain	Committees are chaired by a Member State or an agency (UN or non-UN)	Committees are composed by Member States, UN agencies and non-UN agencies.	Committees work at the managerial level and are often composed by Chief Statisticians	Committees are long-term . If deemed necessary, they may request their disbandment in order to discontinue their work	Mandates of Committees are formulated to provide overall vision, coordination, guidance, prioritization and direction in the relevant statistical domain. Their expected outputs are typically concrete strategies and roadmaps with a view to achieve coherent and integrated programmes of work. Committees' role may include monitoring progress and finding resources.	Committees are expected to report to the Commission at least every two years	Committees oversee and coordinate full work programmes. Due to the broad scope of the task, they often have a substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually). Committees should meet more often, given their strategic nature	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact

Type of group	Pillar	Statistical domain	Core technical focus ¹	Chair(s)	Members and observers	Membership level	Timeframe	Mandate and outputs	Periodicity of reporting to UNSC	Subgroups	Meeting frequency	Communication and outreach
Inter-Agency and Expert Group	Inter-agency and expert groups may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Inter-agency and expert groups have twin focus: methodology and coordination . Thus their primary involves the development of a statistical standard (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks, and they liaise among multiple stakeholders in order to coordinate statistical activities in the relevant domain.	Inter-agency and expert groups are chaired by a Member State or a UN agency	Inter-agency and expert groups are composed by Member States and UN agencies. Non-UN agencies can join as observers	Inter-agency and expert groups work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	Inter-agency and expert groups are long-term . If deemed necessary, they may request their disbandment in order to discontinue their work	Mandates of Inter-agency and expert groups are formulated to address the issues of conceptualization and revision of methodology, frameworks, standards and instruments in a broad statistical domain, coordinating statistical developments among multiple stakeholders. Their outputs are typically high-level methodological documents, recommendations, guidelines, and often	Inter-agency and Expert groups are expected to report to the Commission at least every three years	Inter-agency and Expert groups deliver full methodological developments and coordinate full work programmes. Due to the depth and reach of the task, they often have a substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually)	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact
Network	Inter-agency and expert groups may work in one of the three pillars of sustainable development (Economic, Social and Environmental) or carry out work that cuts across the three substantive pillars	All types of groups are expected to base their work on the Classification of International Statistical Activities, to the extent possible	Networks focus on capacity development , which involves conducting capacity development activities, including training, skills development and technical assistance; on data , which relates to carrying out technical research and development regarding data.	Networks can be chaired by Member States, UN agencies, non-UN agencies or academic institutions	Networks are composed by Member States, UN agencies, non-UN agencies, academic institutions and civil society organisations	Networks work at the technical level and are composed by experts in the relevant statistical domain	Networks are long-term and do not have a set duration. However, they are expected to transition into a more structured setting if they wish to carry out activities outside their core technical focus, e.g. methodology	Mandates of networks are focused on the implementation of capacity development or data programmes. Activities of networks are complementary to existing learning and data processes, and expand their reach. Their outputs are typically capacity development activities, or data-related documents	Networks are expected to report to the Commission at least every five years, and should do so jointly with other actors working in the same statistical domain	Networks adapt more nimbly to changing conditions, thus it is preferable that they do not have a heavy substructure	All types of groups are expected to meet at least annually (in person or virtually)	All types of groups are expected to maintain an updated webpage, containing at least: mandate and terms of reference, year established, secretariat, members and Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission, and points of contact

¹ Technical focus refers to areas under the purview of the Commission, as per Economic and Social Council resolutions 8 (II) and 1566 (L). In their report to the 50th session (E/CN.3/2019/22), the Bureau defined four categories of technical focus as follows: (a) Methodology, which primarily involves the development of a statistical standard (or normative document), including its revisions and accompanying manuals and handbooks; (b) Coordination, which entails coordinating statistical activities among multiple stakeholders; (c) Capacity development, which involves conducting capacity development activities, including training, skills development and technical assistance; (d) Data, which relates to carrying out technical research and development regarding data.