



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Statistics

First session
15-17 December 2008
Bangkok

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

Documentation

Tentative programme
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/1)

The tentative programme for the opening of the session will be made available in due course.

(b) Election of officers

Documentation

Provisional list of participants
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/2)

The Committee will elect a bureau composed of a chairperson, three vice-chairpersons and a rapporteur to guide the work of the session.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda
(E/ESCAP/CST/L.1)

Annotated provisional agenda
(E/ESCAP/CST/L.2)

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Terms of reference and functioning of the Committee on Statistics

Documentation

Terms of reference of the Committee on Statistics and the proposed functioning of the Committee
(E/ESCAP/CST/1)

Rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/3)

The Commission, through its resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission, established the Committee on Statistics as an independent subsidiary body of the Commission and mandated it to meet on a biennial basis.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/1 contains the terms of reference adopted by the Commission through its resolution 64/1 for all eight committees, including the Committee on Statistics, which comprise the subsidiary structure of the Commission. Document E/ESCAP/CST/1 also provides background information to facilitate deliberations on the proposed functioning of the new Committee on Statistics, including linkages of the Committee's envisaged work with the international statistical system and relevant regional and global bodies and meetings, as well as background information on the Forum for Asia/Pacific Statisticians (APEX). APEX has acted as a regional modality for the collective consideration of statistical development issues that national decision makers face and of Asian and Pacific inputs to global discussions at the United Nations Statistical Commission in the period between the restructuring of the Commission in 2002 and 2008. Two APEX meetings have since been convened in 2005 and 2006. Document E/ESCAP/CST/INF/3 contains the rules of procedure of the Commission for the reference of the Committee.

The Committee may wish to provide guidance on its effective functioning in order to advance statistics development in Asia and the Pacific. Specifically, the Committee may wish to consider, with respect to its terms of reference, (a) its role as the main intergovernmental forum in the Asian and Pacific region for advancing statistics development, taking into consideration its linkage with other forums, such as the East Asian Statistical Conference and the United Nations Statistical Commission, and (b) the organization of its work in between its biennial sessions, which could be through such means as the continued functioning of the bureau for a session until the election of the next bureau for the subsequent session, theme-focused working groups or task forces.

3. Statistics development in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Overview of statistics development in Asia and the Pacific
(E/ESCAP/CST/2)

Strategic framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011
(E/ESCAP/CST/10)

Statistics development: perspectives of subregional organizations
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/4)

Background documentation for the deliberations on statistics development in Asia and the Pacific is contained in a regional overview authored by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/CST/2) and a compilation of information papers (E/ESCAP/CST/INF/4) from organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which have significant statistics development activities in the respective subregions.

The Committee may wish to discuss the key achievements and challenges identified with regard to statistics development in the Asian and Pacific region. In particular, the Committee may wish to advise the secretariat on factors affecting the demand for official statistics and how these should be taken into account in identifying priorities for national statistics systems and related development efforts.

This agenda item also serves to review preparations for reporting on statistics development in Asia and the Pacific to the United Nations Statistical Commission at its fortieth session, to be held in New York from 24 to 27 February 2009.

The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on its future work as contained in the document entitled "Strategic framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011" (E/ESCAP/CST/10).

4. Regional technical cooperation in statistics development

Documentation

ESCAP strategy for technical cooperation in statistics development
(E/ESCAP/CST/3)

Strengthening statistical training in the region and the role of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
(E/ESCAP/CST/4)

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CST/3, which summarizes the key achievements of the ongoing technical cooperation projects on statistics of ESCAP and outlines a strategy for future activities, and document E/ESCAP/CST/4 by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) on strengthening statistical training in the region and the role of SIAP.

The Committee may wish to review the proposals contained in the two documents and to provide its guidance on their implementation.

5. Improving gender statistics: measuring violence against women

Documentation

Measuring violence against women: towards better indicators
(E/ESCAP/CST/5)

Measuring violence against women: country perspectives
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/5)

The improvement of gender statistics goes beyond collecting and disseminating sex-disaggregated indicators. There is a need to produce data on topics that pertain mainly to women and which are not covered by conventional official statistics.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/5 contains an overview of data availability on violence against women and discusses the main challenges in related data collection, use and dissemination in the Asian and Pacific region. The document includes the outcomes of a regional expert group meeting on indicators of violence against women (held in Bangkok in October 2008) and the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the indicators of violence against women, to be presented to the fortieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in February 2009.

Two member States will share their experiences in addressing practical issues in data collection for violence against women indicators, as contained in a compilation of their information papers (E/ESCAP/CST/INF/5). The Committee may wish to consider a common Asian and Pacific position on the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the indicators of violence against women.

The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on its future work regarding the measurement of violence against women.

6. Towards an action plan for the development of economic statistics in the Asian and Pacific region

Documentation

Towards an action plan for the development of economic statistics in the Asian and Pacific region
(E/ESCAP/CST/6)

Statistical capacity-building activities to assist developing countries in implementing international standards in economic statistics: the role of the Asian Development Bank
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/6)

At its thirty-ninth session, held in February 2008, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted, in principle, volume 1 of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) as the new international standard and reaffirmed the role of SNA as the integrating framework in economic statistics. The Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts will present the implementation

strategy of the updated SNA to the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session in February 2009. On the other hand, the majority of Asian and Pacific developing countries are not yet in a position to comply with the minimum requirements of the previous standard, as contained in the 1993 SNA.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/6, authored by the Statistics Division of the ESCAP secretariat, in collaboration with SIAP and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, explains the rationale for adopting the 2008 SNA, which is a substantial revision of the 1993 SNA. In the document, the secretariat also assesses the main reasons for the slow implementation and outlines options for global and regional support towards improving economic statistics and national accounts in the Asian and Pacific region.

Information paper E/ESCAP/CST/INF/6 by the Asian Development Bank discusses the results of its statistical capacity-building programme and its plan to assist Asian and Pacific developing countries in implementing international standards in economic statistics.

The Committee may wish to discuss the factors that have hampered the implementation of the 1993 SNA, the feasibility of implementing the 2008 SNA, as well as the modalities for an action plan for the development of economic statistics in Asian and Pacific developing countries.

7. Producing population estimates on an annual basis: the central role of vital statistical systems

Documentation

Tools and solutions for better data on births, deaths and causes of death
(E/ESCAP/CST/7)

Towards improving vital statistics: new regional initiative funded by the Australian Agency for International Development
(E/ESCAP/CST/8)

Improving death registration and certification in Thailand
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/7)

Many developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region encounter major challenges in producing reliable annual population estimates. The huge need for reliable and timely population and cause of death data by age and sex stands in stark contrast to the information available in many countries where even the total number of births and deaths is not known. The lack of progress over the past decades in improving the coverage of civil registration systems has pushed many developing countries to organize specialized household surveys to obtain the data required to produce the annual population estimates needed for the development process. These ad-hoc surveys can deliver approximate measures for birth and death, but due to their costs do not represent a sustainable tool to generate annual population estimates and give little or no information on cause of death. The improvement of civil registration and vital statistical systems is the only sustainable solution in the long run and the only one that benefits both individuals and society.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/7 introduces new tools and emerging solutions towards achieving better and more complete data on births, deaths and causes of death. The document discusses innovative work by the World Health Organization, the Health Metrics Network and other partners to assist countries in improving their vital statistics. In particular, it introduces a tool for assessing the quality of vital statistics derived from civil registration and some interim measures that countries could use for meeting their needs for information on births, deaths and causes of death.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/8 contains information on a new regional initiative funded by the Australian Agency for International Development which also relates to vital statistics, as it is concerned with strengthening the knowledge and evidence base for improving health information systems more generally.

Document E/ESCAP/CST/INF/7 gives an overview of the experience of Thailand in improving the coverage and completeness of its vital statistics and the quality of its cause of death statistics.

The Committee may wish to provide guidance concerning the secretariat's involvement in regional and global initiatives for improving vital statistics and on the feasibility of using the World Health Organization/Health Metrics Network guidelines and methods to strengthen national statistics systems.

8. Measuring the progress of societies

Documentation

Measuring the progress of societies: What is the relevance for Asia and the Pacific?
(E/ESCAP/CST/9)

Measuring the progress of societies: country perspectives
(E/ESCAP/CST/INF/8)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the leading coordinating entity of the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies, which was officially launched in July 2008. The premise of the Project is rooted in the Istanbul Declaration, the main outcome of the Second OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 2007. The Declaration calls for a concerted effort to define and measure progress in the twenty-first century, with a clear emphasis on statistical capacity-building in developing countries. The United Nations was among the first six signatories to the Istanbul Declaration.

In document E/ESCAP/CST/9, OECD presents the fundamentals of the project, specifically underlining its relevance to the Asian and Pacific region and how the project complements related regional and global initiatives. In addition, a compilation of information papers (E/ESCAP/CST/INF/8) provides some Asian and Pacific country perspectives on the subject.

The Committee may wish to provide guidance on the possible participation of the secretariat as a partner of the Global Project.

9. Consideration of possible draft resolutions and decisions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-fifth session

Member States are invited to circulate in advance proposals, including the text of draft resolutions and decisions, on priority issues relating to statistics development in the Asian and Pacific region. The Committee will review any draft proposals from a technical perspective and provide advice on their submission to the Commission at its sixty-fifth session.

10. Other matters

The Committee may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

11. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Statistics

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its first session for submission to the Commission at its sixty-fifth session, to be held from 23 to 29 April 2009.

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