



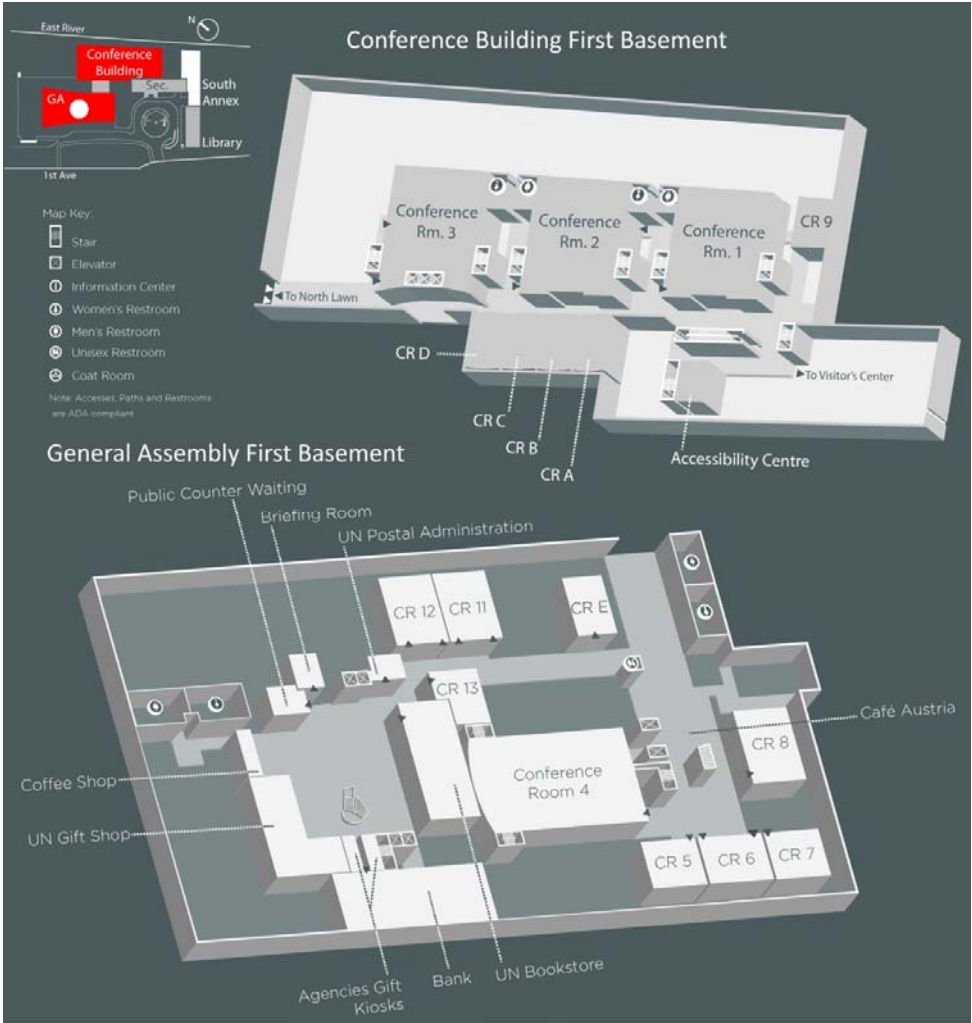
**Orientation handbook
for the 47th session of the
UN Statistical Commission**

BETTER DATA. BETTER LIVES.

unstats.un.org

[@UNStats](https://twitter.com/UNStats)
[#UN47SC](https://twitter.com/UN47SC)

Map



Welcome



Dear Colleague,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 47th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

It has become a tradition that we offer an orientation session to welcome our colleagues who are participating in the Statistical Commission for the first time. All of us in the United Nations Statistics Division hope that this brief introduction to the Commission and to our Division will make this week as productive and agreeable as possible for you.

A short questionnaire will be passed around to help us assess the impact of this orientation session. We would be most grateful to receive your feedback.

Stefan Schweinfest
Director
Statistics Division

Overview



The **United Nations Statistical Commission**, established in 1947, is the highest body of the global statistical system. It brings the chief statisticians of Member States together from around the world. It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international levels.

The **Commission** oversees the work of the **United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)**, and is a functional commission of the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC or the Council)**.

During the session, delegates are encouraged to:

- Actively contribute;
- Be brief and concise in your oral interventions; and
- Share national practices, report routine activities or detailed expositions of methodology in written form rather than orally.

Delegates also have a chance to meet statisticians from:

- National Statistics Offices;
- International Organizations;
- the Secretariat (United Nations Statistics Division); and
- other delegations at the reception on Tuesday evening.

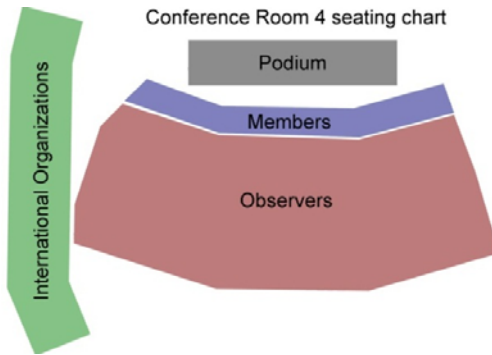
Mandates

The terms of reference as set forth in **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1566 (L) of 3 May 1971**, reaffirming its resolution 8 (I) of 16 February 1946, as amended by resolution 8 (II) of 21 June 1946, state that the Commission shall assist the Council:

- (a) In promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability;
- (b) In the coordination of the statistical work of specialized agencies;
- (c) In the development of the central statistical services of the Secretariat;
- (d) In advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information;
- (e) In promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally.

In **General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015**, the General Assembly decided that "the [Sustainable Development] Goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States, in addition to the outcomes of work undertaken for the development of the baselines for those targets where national and global baseline data does not yet exist. The global indicator framework, to be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, will be agreed by the Statistical Commission by March 2016 and adopted thereafter by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, in line with existing mandates. This framework will 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."

Membership



The Commission consists of 24 UN Member States elected by the **ECOSOC** to serve a term of four years on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution as follows:

- 5 members from African States (currently Angola, Cameroon*, Kenya, Libya and Togo)
- 4 members from Asian States (currently China*, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Qatar)
- 4 members from Eastern European States (currently Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and the Russian Federation)
- 4 members from Latin American and Caribbean States (currently Barbados*, Brazil, Cuba and Dominican Republic)
- 7 members from Western European and other States (currently Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom* and the United States).

The **chair**, **3 vice-chairs** and the **rappporteur** are the 5 officers of the Commission, known as the **Bureau** and are denoted by an “*” above. They are elected for a one-year term with the expectation that they will serve for a further year if available. Nominations of these officers are made by the Commission with elections held at the beginning of the session. In practice elections are by acclamation.

Documents

The Commission deliberates on two types of documents; **official** and **background** documents. These are found on the Commission website: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/>

Official documents	Formally edited and available in the 6 official languages of the UN. They are subject to a strict word limit and submitted to the Secretariat in December. They carry a formal document reference. For example: “E/CN.3/2016/1” where “E” is for ECOSOC, “CN.3” is for the Statistical Commission, “2016” is the year and “1” is the document number.
Background documents	Not formally edited and therefore do not have a word limit. They are typically available in English only and become available at different times over the weeks before the Commission session starts.

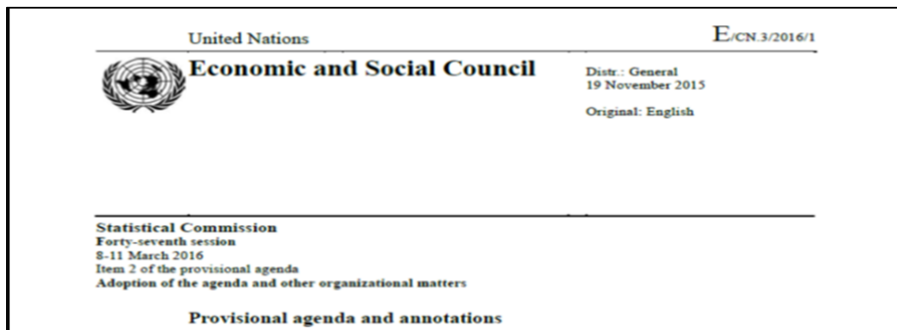


<http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/>

All documents will be available electronically both on the Commission website and on a PaperSmart portal. They can be printed on demand (POD) in the conference room. A few copies of background documents may be available on side tables in the conference room. Only the following documents are distributed desk to desk to delegations:

- Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.3/2016/1)
- Provisional programme of work and timetable for the session (E/CN.3/2016/L.1)
- Draft report on the session
- Draft resolutions (if applicable)

Agenda



The agenda is organised in the following sections:

- Tuesday** Opening session
 Election of officers for the year
 Adoption of the agenda and timetable

- Tuesday** Items for discussion/decision
to Items for information
- Thursday**

- Friday** UNSD programme statement
 Provisional agenda and dates for next year's session
 Adoption of the Commission report (decisions)

The adoption of the agenda is normally a routine matter; last minute changes are unusual.

Items for discussion and decision are for the Commission to discuss and take decisions or actions. The chair will mention the relevant document related to the item, an oral introduction will be given by the author, the chair will open the floor for discussion, and a summary will be made by the Secretariat (UNSD staff) after the discussion.

Items for information refer to progress reports, which the Commission takes note of usually without further debate. Information items are handled as a bloc; the Chair will offer the Commission the opportunity to identify information items for which interventions are requested for clarifications or updates only.

Highlights



46th session (2015)

Established the **Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (SDGs)**
Adopted a resolution launching the **2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme**

44th session (2013)

Endorsed the **Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES)**
Established the **Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information**
Adopted the **Central Product Classification (CPC) [Ver.2.1]**

43rd session (2012)

Adopted the **System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)**

42nd session (2011)

Adopted the **International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES)**

41st session (2010)

Endorsed the first **World Statistics Day**
Adopted **International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)**

40th session (2009)

Adopted the **System of National Accounts 2008**

39th session (2008)

Adopted the **International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, revision 4**
Recognised **Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange** as the preferred standard for data and metadata exchange

Special Session (1994)

Adopted the **Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

Did you know?

There were **9 countries** represented at the **1st session** of the Commission in 1947. The Secretariat expects **over 130 countries** to participate in the current **47th session**.

Country	Number of sessions ¹
Russian Federation ²	48
United Kingdom	48
United States	48
France	48
India	46
Canada	44
Ukraine	35
China	34

The United Kingdom has held the Chair most frequently (for 6 sessions), followed by the Netherlands and the United States (for 4 sessions each).

The most discussed topic has been national accounts (in 29 sessions).

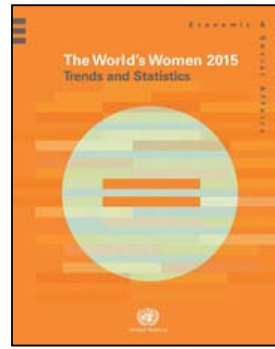
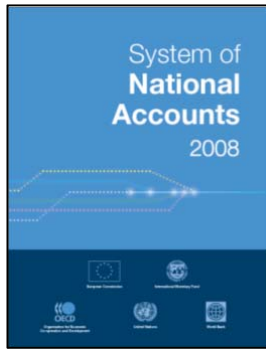
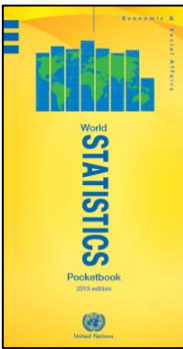
Decade	Most common theme discussed
2000s	Millennium Development Goals
1990s	Coordination and integration of statistical programmes and technical cooperation
1980s	Environment statistics, links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS), population and housing censuses, SNA, technical cooperation
1970s	Coordination and integration of statistical programs
1960s	System of National Accounts (SNA)
1950s	External trade statistics
1940s	Statistical sampling

¹ Both as an observer/ member and includes nuclear and special sessions

² Formerly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

- Acts as the Secretariat for the UN Statistical Commission
- Coordinates statistical activities of the UN System
- Promotes good statistical practices
- Harmonizes statistical standards
- Undertakes statistical capacity building
- Compiles statistics at the global level



Regular work programme areas include:

- Demographic and social statistics
- Environment and energy statistics
- Environmental-economic accounting
- Geospatial information
- Gender statistics
- Industrial statistics
- International trade and economic globalisation
- National accounts
- Statistical classifications

Cross-cutting and emerging issues include:

- Big data for official statistics
- Data and indicators for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Resources

Web resources

47th session of the UN Statistical Commission:

Main page:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/>

Side events calendar:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/side-events/>

Documents:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/>

<http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/>

Other useful documents:

New York resource guide:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/resources/New-York-resource-guide-47th-session.pdf>

UNSD at a glance:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/brochures/UNSD_Brochure.pdf

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/aboutus.htm>

Selected acronyms:

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CCSA	Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America & Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Eurostat	European Union statistical office; never written out
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-Women	UN entity for Gender equality & empowerment of Women
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization