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Statistical Commission

**Report on the fifty-first session
(3–6 March 2020)**

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Statistical Commission

Report on the fifty-first session (3–6 March 2020)



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Note

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution for adoption by the Council

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Strengthening coordination of the statistical programmes in the United Nations system

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of reliable statistical information for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹

Recalling that, in its resolution [71/313](#) of 6 July 2017, the General Assembly urged that communication and coordination among international organizations be enhanced in order to avoid duplicate reports, ensure consistency of data and reduce response burdens on countries, and urged international organizations to provide the methodologies used to harmonize country data for international comparability and produce estimates through transparent mechanisms,

Recalling also that, in the same resolution, Member States urged United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, to intensify their support for strengthening data collection and statistical capacity-building in a coordinated manner,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution [68/261](#) of 29 January 2014, in which the Assembly endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics² and in which the Assembly stressed that bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributed to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries,

Recognizing that the United Nations statistical system has grown significantly, reflecting the increasing complexity of the development phenomena with which the United Nations is concerned and demonstrating that solid and high-quality statistical information is an indispensable prerequisite for global and sustainable development,

Taking note of Statistical Commission decision [50/103](#), in which the Commission recognized the urgent need for a better coordinated and more efficient United Nations statistical system, to reduce the reporting burden and to raise the standing of official statistics within the United Nations system, and, to that end, supported the following recommendations: (a) to immediately strengthen the existing coordination mechanisms, (b) to then take the issue of official statistics to the higher political level, including the Economic and Social Council and (c) to ensure the active involvement of the statistical community, as presented in the background document prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as appropriate,

¹ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

² General Assembly resolution [68/261](#).

1. *Recognizes* that coordination between the statistical programmes of the United Nations system requires streamlining and improving in order to better support the efficiency of the United Nations statistical system to provide harmonized, reliable statistical information for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ to minimize the reporting burden, support national ownership and improve coordination of capacity-building;

2. *Further recognizes* that the United Nations Statistical Commission remains the primary body for the coordination of statistical programmes of the United Nations system;

3. *Requests* the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System to more effectively strengthen coordination of statistical programmes within the United Nations system, guided by and in support of the work of the Statistical Commission;

4. *Also requests* the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the secretariat of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System to provide adequate support to the coordination function of the Statistical Commission as well as related activities of the Committee, by considering pursuing a range of activities that could include the following:

Improved functional coordination

(a) Well-coordinated activities, including a road map and action plan for the United Nations statistical programme with target and performance indicators to monitor the development of United Nations statistical governance towards a strengthened and efficient United Nations statistical system, to be considered by the Statistical Commission;

(b) Improved coordination in the area of data collection, in collaboration with organizations at all levels, to avoid duplication in that area and thus reduce the response burden for Member States;

(c) Modernized statistical processes at the United Nations as well as in Member States, upon their request, to be achieved by improving the efficiency of data collection, implementing new methodologies and emphasizing the impact of statistics, under the leadership and coordination of the national statistical offices, as applicable;

(d) Improved dialogue with the statistical community and decision makers to review the relevance of the current data requests in relation to changing information needs in order to facilitate more optimal statistical services with a view to meeting the information demands;

(e) Improved coordination in the area of capacity-building (in line with the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data), especially in the capacity-building of developing countries, including through the facilitation of South-South cooperation;

Improved regional and national coordination

(f) Support provided to United Nations regional commissions and country offices in facilitating the work of regional and national coordination structures in the field of statistics, as appropriate;

³ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

Improved coordination in thematic areas

(g) Improved knowledge-sharing and the establishment of common practices in adopting new data sources through workshops, the development of technical material and a knowledge base;

(h) Established policies and standards for achieving open data, with required data protection for sensitive data, in conformity with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics² and national laws and regulations;

(i) United Nations Statistical Quality Assurance Framework implemented by members of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System, inter alia, by conducting or facilitating peer reviews of United Nations agencies, upon request;

Improved coordination with other professional networks

(j) Collaboration and cooperation established and maintained between the Committee and the United Nations Geospatial Network in the area of statistical and geospatial integration;

(k) Improved knowledge-sharing among members of the Committee in the area of the use of geospatial information in the collection, processing and dissemination of data;

Improved secretariat coordination

(l) Improved communication through the continued production and distribution of Committee documents and joint statements for the relevant bodies in the United Nations system, including the Chief Executives Board for Coordination;

5. *Decides* that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met from voluntary contributions.

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-first session and the provisional agenda and dates for the fifty-second session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-first session;

(b) Decides that the fifty-second session of the Commission shall be held in New York from 2 to 5 March 2021;

(c) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-second session of the Commission, as set out below:

Provisional agenda for the fifty-second session of the Commission

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

Documentation

Provisional agenda and annotations

Note by the Secretariat on the provisional programme of work and timetable

3. Demographic and social statistics:

(a) Demographic statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(b) International migration statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(c) Culture statistics;

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(d) Household surveys;

Documentation

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

(e) Ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data.

Documentation

Report of the Titchfield Group on Ageing-Related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data

4. Economic statistics:

(a) National accounts;

Documentation

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts

(b) Business registers;

Documentation

Joint report of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers and the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics

(c) Energy statistics;

Documentation

Joint report of the Secretary-General and the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

(d) International trade and economic globalization statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(e) Digital trade and e-commerce statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics

- (f) Tourism statistics;

Documentation

Report of the World Tourism Organization

- (g) Finance statistics;

Documentation

Report of the International Monetary Fund

- (h) International Comparison Programme;

Documentation

Report of the World Bank

- (i) Informal sector statistics;

Documentation

Report of the International Labour Organization

- (j) Future of economic statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics

5. Natural resources and environment statistics:

- (a) Environmental-economic accounting;

Documentation

Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

- (b) Climate change statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

- (c) Disaster-related statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

6. Activities not classified by field:

- (a) Coordination of statistical programmes;

Documentation

Report of Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

Report of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System

- (b) International statistical classifications;

Documentation

Report of the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications

- (c) Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata;

Documentation

Report of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange sponsors

- (d) Presentation of statistical data and metadata;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

- (e) Statistical capacity-building;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

- (f) Dissemination of statistics by the Statistics Division;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

- (g) Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Documentation

Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General on the work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

- (h) Follow-up to the policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

- (i) National quality assurance frameworks;

Documentation

Report of the Expert Group on National Quality Assurance Frameworks

- (j) Integration of statistical and geospatial information;

Documentation

Report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

- (k) Big data;

Documentation

Report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics

- (l) Regional statistical development;

Documentation

Report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

- (m) World Statistics Day.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

7. Programme questions (Statistics Division).
8. Provisional agenda and dates for the fifty-third session of the Commission.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for the fifty-third session of the Commission

Note by the Secretariat on the draft multi-year programme of work of the Commission

9. Report of the Commission on its fifty-second session.

C. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council

3. The following decisions adopted by the Commission are brought to the attention of the Council.

51/101

Global indicator framework for Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators,⁴ and expressed appreciation to the Group for its continued work to review and improve the global indicator framework to effectively monitor the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;⁵

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the progress made on the methodological development and upgrading of many tier III indicators in advance of the 2020 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework;

(c) Expressed its appreciation for the open and transparent process conducted for the 2020 comprehensive review in order to improve the indicator framework, without adding a burden to countries, to help with global monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, including for the guiding principles of the review process itself;

(d) Agreed to and adopted the proposed major changes and minor refinements put forward in the 2020 comprehensive review, while noting concerns regarding specific indicators and recognized that the work on Sustainable Development Goal indicators is in progress, and asked the Group to continue its annual refinement, research and methodological work to improve the global indicator framework, including addressing important policy issues, such as sustainable tourism and climate change;

(e) Reiterated that the application of the global indicator framework is a voluntary and country-led process and that alternative or complementary indicators

⁴ E/CN.3/2020/2.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

for national and subnational levels of monitoring will be developed at the national level on the basis of national priorities, realities, capacities and circumstances;

(f) Expressed support for the establishment of a United Nations working group to further develop and refine the measurement of development support in line with the 2030 Agenda and welcomed the inclusion of member States representing all geographic regions, both donor and recipient countries, in the working group, and asked the group to build on relevant, previous work in that area;

(g) Welcomed the background document on interlinkages and the release of the data structure definition for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, which facilitates the automation of data exchange and improves data validation and dissemination, and stressed the importance of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for monitoring the Goals;

(h) Welcomed the identification of data disaggregation as one of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group's main areas of work for 2020 and agreed that the Group should develop guidelines and build capacity on disaggregated data to measure progress for those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations;

(i) Encouraged further work on a better integration of geospatial and statistical information to better monitor the 2030 Agenda through the working group on geospatial information;

(j) Highlighted the need for methodology guidelines to strengthen national statistical systems in order to be able to produce the required indicators, and also highlighted the need to continue to strengthen cooperation between countries and custodian agencies;

(k) Approved the proposed work programme of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, as described in section VI of the report.

51/102 Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals,⁶ and took note of the proposed programme of work of the Statistics Division in cooperation with the United Nations system;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the work of the Statistics Division, in cooperation with the United Nations system, in support of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁷ including the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019 and the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, and requested that transparency be ensured as to the data being made available;

(c) Requested the Statistics Division to continue leading the coordination with the United Nations statistical system in the preparation of the annual progress report;

⁶ E/CN.3/2020/3.

⁷ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

(d) Expressed its appreciation for the capacity development activities carried out by the Statistics Division and its partners to assist Member States in making data on the Goals available, and welcomed the coordination of efforts at the national level;

(e) Strongly supported the Data for Now initiative to build capacity in countries to utilize new data sources for more timely and disaggregated statistics and indicators, and requested that efforts be focused on less developed countries;

(f) Welcomed the scaling up of the federated system initiative by including more countries and increasing capacity at the national level, and stressed the need to mobilize funding while ensuring coordination with related efforts;

(g) Took note of the common Internationalized Resource Identifiers for Sustainable Development Goals, targets, indicators and related data series, and encouraged the dissemination of data in linked open data format;

(h) Stressed the importance of carrying out statistical training, welcomed the efforts of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, and requested the Global Network to continue the work and to further expand its membership;

(i) Welcomed the efforts of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, and stressed the need for an integrated and harmonized household survey programme within countries, including by integrating new data sources and household survey data, and requested the Intersecretariat Working Group to focus on countries' priorities, to include representatives of national statistical institutes in its membership, to coordinate its work with related groups and to develop guidance in innovative solutions and capacity-building for scaling up these approaches in countries.

51/103

Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁸ and expressed its appreciation for the work conducted;

(b) Welcomed the work of the High-level Group and the Programme Committee for the United Nations World Data Forum 2020 in preparation for the third United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in Bern in October 2020, and asked the Secretariat to continue to support the organization of the Forum as the critical space for constructive exchange among different data communities and users for the launch of solutions and new initiatives and partnerships;

(c) Welcomed the way forward to achieve a better coordinated and more efficient United Nations statistical system, which should also aim at reducing the response burden of countries;

(d) Welcomed the way forward in the area of financing for data and statistics and the proposed financing mechanism around three pillars (to secure domestic funding, to improve the efficiency of existing resources through better coordination and to increase the overall amount of funding), stressed that more statistical capacity-building and financing for statistics are needed and welcomed the efforts by the undertaken by the High-level Group, in cooperation with all stakeholders, including

⁸ E/CN.3/2020/4.

the private sector and the Bern Network on Financing Data for Development, which is mobilizing commitments for more and better funding, to be announced at the Forum in October 2020;

(e) Approved the proposed programme of work for the High-level Group, and asked the Group to report back to the Commission at its fifty-second session on the implementation and outcome of the third United Nations World Data Forum.

51/104

Coordination of statistical programmes

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System on coordination within the United Nations statistical system,⁹ and thanked the Committee for its work in the area of coordination since its establishment by the Commission in 2015;

(b) Recognized that the role of statistical units in the United Nations system has expanded significantly through the data needs of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Reiterated the need for better coordination of the United Nations statistical system in order to strengthen the voice of the statistical community in dialogue with policymakers, to reduce the data reporting burden and eliminate data discrepancies across the United Nations system, to better integrate United Nations capacity-building efforts at the country level, and to jointly develop methodologies, especially for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and to modernize the United Nations statistical system;

(d) Stressed that investments into an effective coordination mechanism in a highly decentralized system could and should lead to efficiency gains in the long run;

(e) Recalled its earlier decision to bring the issue of effective coordination urgently to the attention of the Economic and Social Council;

(f) Agreed that, similar to the situation at the national level, the Statistics Division, as the secretariat of the Statistical Commission, had a special responsibility in supporting coordination efforts throughout the United Nations statistical system;

(g) Requested the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System to provide biannual updates on its work to the Statistical Commission.

51/105

Future of economic statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics,¹⁰ and confirmed that the work of the Friends of the Chair group is already positively influencing the working methods and collaboration among existing groups for the update of the system of economic statistics in support of the monitoring of the

⁹ E/CN.3/2020/5.

¹⁰ E/CN.3/2020/7.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹¹ with links to the environment and well-being;

(b) Commended the group for its efforts to undertake extensive consultations with existing statistical groups and with countries through regional seminars on the future of economic statistics on user-identified priority areas of development, the existence of gaps in priority areas and the current governance and working methods of statistical groups;

(c) Requested the group to further consider the need for a responsive, comprehensive and harmonized system of economic statistics, encompassing macroeconomic accounts, statistical business registers, international classifications and granular data from household, business and trade statistics;

(d) Agreed that the proposed work programme of the group in its second and final year will cover four dimensions: documenting the operations of the current system of statistical groups and the proposed future state, improving connections between statistical groups by establishing networks, challenging statistical groups to operate in new ways, with a focus on experimentation and capacity-building, and increasing engagement with a broad range of users and other potential partners to determine global priorities for the updated system of economic statistics, such as those related to globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, the informal economy and human capital;

(e) Supported the work of the group on the review of the working methods of the existing statistical groups based on common principles, and requested the group to explore new working arrangements to improve the mechanisms of coordination and interactions between the statistical groups in sharing information, setting priorities and avoiding gaps;

(f) Requested existing statistical groups to collaborate with the group to undertake the review of the governance and working methods and trial new action-oriented networking methods to explore their benefits;

(g) Agreed to dissolve the statistical groups that are no longer active in the domain of economic statistics, as listed in paragraph 30 of the report of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics: the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics, the Expert Group on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics, the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Debt Statistics;

(h) Requested the group to challenge the statistical groups with a limited number of short-term projects, building on the needs of developed and developing countries to trial new working methods and networking of statistical groups to support the update of the system of economic statistics;

(i) Encouraged the implementation of mature new conceptual issues in Member States based on detailed guidance notes, and welcomed the interest of Member States to participate in the experimentation;

(j) Welcomed further initiatives on consultations, such as a United Nations global forum on economic statistics, to obtain user feedback on the update of the system of economic statistics and to discuss new working methods to make the system of economic statistics more agile and responsive;

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

(k) Requested a final report of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics to be submitted to the Commission at its fifty-second session in 2021.

51/106

National accounts

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts,¹² expressed its appreciation for the activities undertaken by the members of the Working Group, the regional commissions, other regional organizations and countries to facilitate the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and supporting statistics, and endorsed the programmes of work for 2020 of the Working Group and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts;

(b) Also welcomed the progress of dedicated work streams on resolving the priority issues on the SNA research agenda related to digitalization, globalization, and well-being and sustainability, and expressed support for a broad user-centred consultation, including the United Nations global forum on economic statistics, on the development of SNA;

(c) Endorsed the option of a continuous SNA revision cycle that provides for the drafting of guidance notes on emerging research issues for experimentation by both developed and developing countries with implementation of the new guidance before a major update of SNA, and noted the interest of several Member States in participating in the experimentation and testing of the forthcoming guidance notes;

(d) Requested the Working Group to submit, for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 2021, a road map for the revision of SNA for adoption by the Commission in 2025, including the resource requirements, taking into account the required alignment of the revision cycles of other major statistical manuals and relevant classifications standards for the purpose of consistency between the manuals and classification standards;

(e) Requested the Working Group to continue to develop practical guidance on such issues as the informal economy and Islamic finance and facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA through manuals, handbooks and guidelines;

(f) Welcomed the establishment of the subgroup on communication by the Working Group to develop more user-friendly terminology, communication about the revision cycle and sharing of research results, and compliance with SNA recommendations;

(g) Acknowledged that the approach for updating SNA, presented in the report, is aligned with the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics for establishing a more agile and responsive system of economic statistics;

(h) Expressed concern that there are still a relatively large number of Member States that do not comply with the minimum required scope and detail of national accounts data, and urged those countries with a low level of compliance to develop basic source data for the compilation of national accounts, while recognizing the role of the international and regional organizations in continued capacity-building;

(i) Noted the progress of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) data transmission mechanism for national accounts, recognized that the

¹² E/CN.3/2020/8.

implementation of the SDMX protocols by countries will facilitate data transmission and thereby significantly reduce the response burden in submitting data to international organizations, and requested the Working Group to continue supporting the implementation of SDMX.

51/107

International trade and business statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the joint report of the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics and the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics,¹³ and expressed its appreciation for the activities undertaken by the Committee and the Inter-Agency Task Force;

(b) Welcomed the proposed strategic view on business statistics, and encouraged the Committee to further elaborate and promote it;

(c) Commended the Committee for its efforts to coordinate the activities with relevant statistical groups, and encouraged the Committee to continue seeking cooperation with other groups on areas of common interest;

(d) Recognized the progress made by the Committee in advancing the work in its thematic areas, and requested the Committee to complete relevant guidelines for the implementation of its recommendations;

(e) Recognized the importance of statistical business registers as an essential statistical infrastructure to support the coherence and consistency of statistics and to derive detailed data on businesses and their relation to global value chains, globalization, digitalization, the environment and well-being, and noted that an exhaustive statistical business register should include small and medium-sized enterprises and, to the extent possible, the informal sector;

(f) Welcomed the proposed capacity-building programme on statistical business registers and requested the Statistics Division to report its progress to the Commission at its fifty-second session;

(g) Welcomed the creation of a task team on communication for business and trade statistics;

(h) Took note of the progress of work for the development of a global group register and encouraged the Statistics Division to advance the project in collaboration with national and international institutes, acknowledged the difficulties of building such a register from public records, and suggested that a model, such as the European Groups Register, be considered for building the global group register from country data;

(i) Agreed to the establishment of a central data repository for business and trade statistics to make them more accessible to users and to allow for a virtual connection and dialogue with users;

(j) Took note of the activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics and the *Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade: Version 1*,¹⁴ and stressed the importance of statistics on international trade in services.

¹³ E/CN.3/2020/9.

¹⁴ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund (2020).

51/108 Price statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics;¹⁵

(b) Endorsed the forthcoming Consumer Price Index Manual: Concepts and Methods as an international statistical standard, and requested that the Manual be made available in all six official languages of the United Nations as soon as possible;

(c) Noted that, in order to comply with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,¹⁶ the compilers of the consumer price index should be independent from the users of those statistics, for example, the monetary authorities;

(d) Recognized that the updated Manual should remain relevant and responsive by adopting a more continuous update cycle;

(e) Welcomed the international coordination mechanism used in preparing the updated Manual through the collaboration of international agencies, countries and experts, and encouraged the coordination mechanism to be sustained;

(f) Encouraged countries to use the updated Manual in the compilation of their national consumer price indices and to make use of new data sources and techniques, such as scanner data and web-scraping, when compiling the indices;

(g) Recognized its role in improving the quality of national consumer price indices and improving their international comparability.

51/109 International Comparison Programme

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the World Bank on the International Comparison Programme,¹⁷ and commended the International Comparison Programme stakeholders on successfully completing the 2017 cycle;

(b) Took note of the imminent release of the results from the 2017 cycle and the plans to communicate and promote the use of the results in national policymaking, socioeconomic analyses and development agendas;

(c) Impressed upon stakeholders of the Programme the need to conduct 2020 cycle activities in a timely manner;

(d) Reiterated the need for national, regional and global agencies to incorporate the Programme into their regular statistical work programmes and to ensure its sustainability as a permanent programme;

(e) Urged national statistical systems and international development partners to make resources available for the 2020 cycle and future cycles of the Programme.

¹⁵ E/CN.3/2020/10.

¹⁶ General Assembly resolution 68/261.

¹⁷ E/CN.3/2020/11.

51/110 Environmental-economic accounting

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting,¹⁸ welcomed the work done thus far on mainstreaming the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) as a statistical framework to support various initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, the circular economy, the ocean agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and sustainable tourism, commended current usage of SEEA for country-level reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomed the integration of SEEA into Sustainable Development Goal indicators 15.9.1 and 12.b.1;

(b) Stressed that high-quality environmental accounts can be based on high-quality environment statistics;

(c) Stressed the importance of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in supplying a common measurement framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and related indicators that are currently being negotiated and are expected to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(d) Commended the Committee of Experts for the substantial progress made in the revision of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, expressed appreciation for the inclusive and transparent revision process, noted the high demand and interest from the statistical, scientific and policy communities, emphasized the urgency of providing a standardized methodology for ecosystem accounting that reflects the revision and reinforces the role of national statistical offices as data stewards, and supported the aspiration to elevate the revised SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting to SEEA Ecosystem Accounting;

(e) Acknowledged the importance of developing compilation materials in parallel with the revision of the ecosystem accounting methodologies to support their implementation, including materials on biophysical modelling, valuation, scenario modelling and ocean accounting, in order to meet increasing country demands;

(f) Supported the proposal to consider a revision of the SEEA Central Framework, which integrates updates from the revised SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, aligns with the revision of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and responds to new demands for environmental-economic information, and welcomed the continued collaboration between the Committee of Experts, the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts and the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, in particular the subgroup on well-being and sustainability;

(g) Welcomed the release of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) global data structure definitions for SEEA, and requested the Committee of Experts to disseminate global databases from the United Nations SEEA website using a stepwise approach that minimizes duplication of efforts among international agencies and adopts a fully transparent process, including review of the methodology, country communication and consent before dissemination, and furthermore encouraged the Committee of Experts to explore possibilities to use earth observation combined with national data to develop experimental ecosystem accounts;

¹⁸ E/CN.3/2020/12.

(h) Welcomed the progress made towards the 2020 implementation targets of 100 countries implementing the SEEA Central Framework and 50 countries implementing the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts, and noted the importance of regional collaboration, communities of practice, blended learning workshops, country technical support and a stepwise approach to ensure that the implementation targets are met by the end of 2020, while also acknowledging that regional gaps remain, and encouraging the Committee of Experts to prioritize implementation in Africa;

(i) Took note of the contribution of the European Union-funded project, Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services, in advancing the implementation of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in the partner countries, namely Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, and in supporting the development of methodologies and practical guidelines on ecosystem accounting;

(j) Commended the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on the *Technical Guidance on Ocean Accounting for Sustainable Development*,¹⁹ acknowledged the progress made through country piloting in the region and recognized that the technical guidance provides a solid foundation for integrating ocean accounts into the revision process of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting;

(k) Commended the World Tourism Organization on the work done thus far on the development of a statistical framework for measuring sustainable tourism, which integrates the SEEA and the Tourism Satellite Accounts, acknowledged the continuing progress made through country pilots, and encouraged finalization of the document in the near future.

51/111 Agricultural and rural statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations on recent developments in agricultural and rural statistics,²⁰ and expressed appreciation regarding the comprehensive set of measures that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its partners have implemented over the last 10 years to improve internal governance, as well as the availability and quality of food and agricultural statistics worldwide;

(b) Endorsed the main principles of the proposed strategy for renovating FAO work in statistics, which is aligned with the road map for the modernization of the United Nations statistical system and which will guide FAO efforts to further improve agricultural and rural statistics in the next five years;

(c) Expressed its support for the FAO integrated strategy of statistical capacity development, which is articulated in three main components: (i) technical assistance to improve the capacity of countries to monitor the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators, (ii) the funding and implementation of an integrated programme of agricultural surveys through the “50 x 2030” initiative, and (iii) the action plan for the second phase (2020–2025) of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics;

(d) Reiterated the call to development partners and countries to urgently increase the allocation of resources to statistics, in order to improve data generation

¹⁹ Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (United Nations, 2019).

²⁰ E/CN.3/2020/13.

and use, in particular for food and agricultural statistics, and to strengthen the coordination of statistical capacity-building activities in that area;

(e) Approved the terms of reference and the proposed workplan of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Food Security, Agricultural and Rural Statistics for the period 2020–2023, as described in the report and as will be further refined through the written consultation, which includes: (i) the development of national data quality assurance frameworks for agricultural statistics, (ii) the development of methods and standards for the use of alternative data sources in producing food and agricultural statistics at the national and international levels, (iii) the development of innovative methods for producing real-time statistics at the country level, and (iv) conducting methodological research in the domain of food security statistics to further improve their relevance and accuracy.

51/112

Demographic statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report on the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas for international comparison purposes;²¹

(b) Urged all Member States to ensure completion of the population and housing census or otherwise produce census-like small area statistics at least once in the period 2015–2024;

(c) Requested the continuation of capacity-building through regional and subregional activities to exchange experiences and lessons learned and to address emerging issues, such as functional population;

(d) Requested the development of standard guidelines on the use of administrative sources for generating census and other relevant statistics;

(e) Called upon the Statistics Division to prepare and disseminate the list of countries with census dates and the main census-taking method used, thus enabling direct consultation between Member States;

(f) Expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Statistics Division and the United Nations Population Fund in census-taking and requested the continuation of support throughout the 2020 census round;

(g) Requested more detailed elaboration of the methodology for assessing census over- and underenumeration, as they affect censuses worldwide;

(h) Outlined the need for an increased and active promotion of the population and housing census at the national and subnational levels, thus ensuring full cooperation of the population to be enumerated;

(i) Endorsed the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas for international and regional statistical comparison purposes, as presented in the report, while emphasizing that the methodology is not intended to replace national definitions of urban and rural areas, but to complement them;

(j) Urged the release of the technical report on the implementation of the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas as early as possible;

²¹ E/CN.3/2020/14.

(k) Requested the Statistics Division and the sponsoring organizations to continue reviewing the implementation of the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas and report back to the Commission at one of its future sessions;

(l) Also requested that the handbook on measuring the economically active population in the population census be updated and that a chapter on measuring the informal sector be included.

51/113

Civil registration and vital statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report on the introduction of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda: a holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management,²² and supported the introduction of the Legal Identity Agenda as an expansion of the existing methodological framework for civil registration and vital statistics;

(b) Urged Member States to implement the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda as a matter of priority;

(c) Expressed appreciation for the work of United Nations Legal Identity Agenda task force;

(d) Commended the current implementation of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda in Africa and requested that consideration be given to expanding the implementation beyond the current pilot countries, in Africa and in other regions;

(e) Emphasized the critical role that the national statistical office occupies in the holistic model of the Legal Identity Agenda;

(f) Reiterated the importance of the full implementation of the 2015 revision of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System*,²³ in particular from the point of view of collecting information on place of residence, enabling more information to be collected on the migrations of populations;

(g) Requested the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda Task Force to develop guidelines on the ethical management of information on individuals;

(h) Requested the Statistics Division to continue the existing dissemination of vital statistics and explore possibilities for its improvement.

51/114

Health statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the World Health Organization on health statistics and strengthening statistical systems to track the health-related Sustainable

²² [E/CN.3/2020/15](#).

²³ *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 1* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.XVII.9), *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 2* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XVII.10) and *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.10).

Development Goals²⁴ and the accompanying background document on recent and current work being undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) on health statistics and on strengthening statistical systems to track health-related Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Expressed appreciation for the work that has been initiated by WHO towards the modernization and digitization of classifications and related terminologies, noted the challenges that Member States face in the implementation of the eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases; and called upon WHO to continue to provide support to countries towards its effective implementation and enhanced interoperability;

(c) Noted that monitoring health and health-related Sustainable Development Goals continues to present major challenges to many countries and welcomed the commitment of WHO to strengthen the capacity of countries to improve health data and health information systems;

(d) Stressed the importance of coordination and consultations between national statistical offices, ministries of health and national authorities responsible for civil registration and vital statistics to strengthen the national statistical systems for health that enable robust monitoring of the health-related Goals;

(e) Called upon WHO and all relevant stakeholders in the field of health statistics, including the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission, to work together to ensure a harmonized and coordinated approach for national capacity-building, including data disaggregation to inform progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²⁵ and Agenda 2063.

51/115

Gender statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on gender statistics,²⁶ and expressed appreciation to the Statistics Division and the members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), regional commissions and other key partners, for the work undertaken to strengthen gender data;

(b) Requested that a gender perspective be adopted and integrated into all the agenda items of the Commission, as is, for example, the current practice in the Statistical Conference of the Americas;

(c) Endorsed the work of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Innovative and Effective Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics, approved its terms of reference and congratulated the group on the progress made in developing a conceptual framework to modernize time-use surveys;

(d) Emphasized the need to build capacity and provide technical and financial assistance to national statistical offices in the area of time-use statistics and to inform and monitor policies on unpaid work, non-market production, well-being and gender equality, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;

²⁴ E/CN.3/2020/16.

²⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

²⁶ E/CN.3/2020/17.

(e) Supported the update of the *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work*,²⁷ taking into account relevant guidelines developed at the regional level, and noted the relevance of the Guide to the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, took note of the extensive interest expressed by countries in using the proposed methods and in contributing to their finalization, and requested the translation of the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics, 2016, into all United Nations languages;

(f) Expressed appreciation for the new online format of *The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics*, and endorsed its innovative products, including short gender narratives and related gender story maps, requested the inclusion of an assessment of the status of the girl child, took note of the expression of interest by many countries to contribute to the publication, welcomed the collaborative approach, which included countries and regional and international entities, and recognized the coordinating role of the Statistics Division at the global level to ensure an inclusive and data-driven assessment of the progress achieved towards gender equality;

(g) Welcomed and supported the work priorities of the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics under the umbrella of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, including the ongoing work on the use of administrative data to close gender data gaps, requested the Group to further its methodological work on measuring gender equality by adopting a life cycle approach and taking into account intersecting inequalities, and commended the organization, in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, of the eighth Global Forum on Gender Statistics, contributing to the “Road to Bern” initiative, leading to the third United Nations World Data Forum.

51/116

Refugee statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics,²⁸ commended the work undertaken by the Group to strengthen statistics on forced displacement, endorsed the international recommendations on internally displaced persons statistics, and noted that translations in all United Nations languages would be needed for the implementation of the recommendations;

(b) Welcomed the work being done so far on the compilers’ manual, presenting best practices, and noted that further technical work and a concise and practical guidance, adopting a gender perspective, will be needed for the implementation of the manual;

(c) Approved the terms of reference of the Expert Group, agreed on the continuation of the Expert Group until 2025, and requested the Expert Group to report back to the Commission in three to five years;

(d) Stressed the need for statistical capacity-building to support Member States in improving the quality and availability of statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons, and invited international and regional organizations to support Member States in that regard, upon their request.

²⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XVII.7.

²⁸ [E/CN.3/2020/18](#).

51/117 Governance, peace and security statistics

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics,²⁹ and congratulated the Group on the progress made in providing guidance on governance statistics;
- (b) Endorsed the handbook on governance statistics, to be used by Member States as practical guidance in the compilation and dissemination of governance statistics, recognizing that the handbook encourages the monitoring and implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16;
- (c) Supported the continuation of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics and its work under the proposed revised terms of reference, while requesting that the Group further develop conceptualization of governance statistics, further improve methodology and standardization, add practical experiences, including experience in Africa, review the use of administrative data and develop a strategy for capacity development in that statistical area;
- (d) Requested that the membership of the Praia Group be strategically increased, while recognizing the interest of some countries in joining;
- (e) Requested the Praia Group to report to the Commission at its fifty-second session, in 2021.

51/118 Regional statistical development

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the comprehensive report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on cooperation for regional statistical development,³⁰ and strongly commended the significant collaborative work undertaken by countries and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the Caribbean Community, and the United Nations system to advance statistical development in the region, including by making resources available in the English language and by working together within the knowledge transfer network of the Statistical Conference of the Americas;
- (b) Welcomed the changes made to the working groups mechanism of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, in order to increase the relevance and effectiveness of working groups, and commended the new and improved geographical representation of the Executive Committee of the Conference;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the coordination within the regional United Nations system, under the leading role of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which has resulted in the development of the Sustainable Development Goal Gateway web-based platform for the Latin American and Caribbean region, and recognized it as a key tool for supporting countries in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;³¹

²⁹ E/CN.3/2020/19.

³⁰ E/CN.3/2020/20.

³¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

(d) Noted with appreciation the opportunities highlighted for the interregional exchange of experiences, and encouraged all stakeholders, including regional commissions, to take advantage of each other's strengths in order to enhance statistical and geospatial capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean and across the globe;

(e) Took note of the declaration on the integration of geospatial and statistical information between the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, adopted by the Statistical Conference of the Americas at its tenth meeting;

(f) Supported the call in the declaration to establish national governance mechanisms to facilitate the joint work of national statistical offices, national statistical systems and national mapping agencies to consolidate national spatial data infrastructures.

51/119 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Friends of the Chair group on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,³² and expressed appreciation for the work of the group;

(b) Welcomed the work by the group on the development of two additional chapters for the implementation guide for the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,³³ focused on a compliance and maturity framework for implementation of the Principles, and guidance for the application of the Principles when using new data sources for the production of official statistics;

(c) Endorsed the maturity model as a diagnostic tool that can aid national statistical organizations and national statistical systems in identifying actions to improve compliance with the Fundamental Principles, and welcomed the practical recommendations and country examples included in the guidance and mapping of the Principles with non-traditional data sources as a resource for that emerging area in data and statistics, recognized that there is space for further development, such as linking the tools with other existing resources and tools, and acknowledged the need for technical and financial support for the implementation of the recommendations;

(d) Noted with appreciation the redesigned Fundamental Principles website, and agreed with the proposed strategy to update and maintain the country profiles and documentation of good practices in national statistical systems, as outlined in the report, and requested that open data principles be applied to ensure a reduced burden to countries;

(e) Agreed that the work of the group had concluded for the current round of reviews and that further work on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics will be resumed in time for the next appraisal, in 2024, and requested to ensure representative membership of the group.

³² E/CN.3/2020/21.

³³ General Assembly resolution 68/261.

51/120 Management and modernization of statistical systems

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on management and modernization of statistical systems,³⁴ and acknowledged the progress achieved in drafting the next edition of the *Handbook of Statistical Organization*;

(b) Supported the coordination and consultation mechanisms in place, and appreciated the valuable role of the advisory group tasked with guiding the overall drafting process in sustaining and guiding the overall drafting process;

(c) Reiterated the importance of the *Handbook* being a living document, which will be updated at regular intervals to address common challenges and grasp innovative solutions, including those relating to the production and utilization of the indicators for monitoring progress towards the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³⁵ in a rapidly changing data ecosystem, and agreed that the updates are initially to be marked as preliminary, subject to later confirmation by the Statistical Commission;

(d) Stressed the need for the overview chapter to be available in a hard copy version in all United Nations official languages, to reach the widest audience possible;

(e) Agreed with the proposed updated structure of the *Handbook*, subject to further adaptations and refinements, to be duly considered during the editorial phase of preparation of the document;

(f) Acknowledged the importance of the regional and subregional thematic conferences in informing the *Handbook* on regional and national contexts, common challenges and national best practices, as well as existing initiatives, and recognized the expression of interest to organize or contribute to the thematic conferences;

(g) Supported the name change of the *Handbook* from *Handbook of Statistical Organization* to “Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems”;

(h) Took note of the discussions of the High Level Forum on Official Statistics, which addressed the role of a data steward;

(i) Requested the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to establish a working mechanism open to other stakeholders and linked to existing initiatives at the global and regional levels to address the issue of data stewardship and the role of statistical offices in the new data ecosystem, and noted that the work should consist of a stocktaking exercise and specific recommendations on the way forward, to be provided to the Commission at its fifty-second session.

51/121 Information and communications technology statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development,³⁶ and congratulated the Partnership on

³⁴ E/CN.3/2020/22.

³⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

³⁶ E/CN.3/2020/23.

Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development on the progress it had made regarding the availability and comparability of information and communications technology statistics;

(b) Welcomed the revised guidelines to produce information and communications technology statistics, recognized the importance of such statistics for sustainable development and for building resilience, and requested additional guidance on the compilation of statistics on information and communications technology services in relation to e-commerce, the digital economy and the sharing economy;

(c) Endorsed the thematic list of information and communications technology indicators for monitoring progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;³⁷ and requested to possibly expand the list, for example with indicators regarding cybersecurity;

(d) Expressed support for the continuation of the work of the Partnership.

51/122

Big data

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics,³⁸ congratulated the Global Working Group on the progress made regarding the United Nations Global Platform, the regional hubs and the active collaboration in the area of new data sources, methods and training, and especially thanked the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Statistics Division for their efforts in that regard;

(b) Endorsed the United Nations Global Platform as a collaborative environment for data innovation by the global statistical community and all its partners, including a broad spectrum of stakeholder communities;

(c) Endorsed the governance structure and business model of the United Nations Global Platform presented under the overall auspices of the Commission, while requesting further work on the funding aspects of the business model, requesting coordination of the activities of the regional hubs with those of existing initiatives at the regional level and requesting regular reporting to the Commission, especially on the activities of the regional hubs;

(d) Supported the planned data solutions projects and methodological guidance on the United Nations Global Platform through the Global Working Group task teams, and requested that the Global Working Group focus on developing guidance for the harmonization of methods and the development of appropriate quality assurance frameworks for the use of big data for official statistics and Sustainable Development Goal indicators, in conformity with national laws and regulations;

(e) Supported the delivery of the envisioned training programme at scale by the Global Working Group and the United Nations Global Platform on topics related to big data and data science for the purpose of developing necessary capacity in statistical institutes, while requesting that other stakeholder communities also be included in the training initiative;

³⁷ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

³⁸ E/CN.3/2020/24.

(f) Urged the United Nations Global Platform network, including the global statistical community, the private sector, civil society and academia, to promote and mobilize resources and support for the Global Platform and for the related training activities.

51/123

Integration of statistical and geospatial information

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information,³⁹ and commended the Expert Group on its significant body of work to advance the development and completion of a global statistical geospatial framework so that there is increased information available to support social, economic and environmental policy and decision-making, including at the regional, national and subnational levels;

(b) Noted the increasing relevance of and need for the integration of statistical and geospatial information as an important bridge to enable the production of harmonized, standardized and integrated, geospatially enabled statistical data to facilitate data-driven decision-making, in particular with regard to the implementation of the 2020 round of population censuses and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Endorsed the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, as adopted by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in its decision 9/106 of 9 August 2019, and welcomed its adoption and implementation by Member States as a result of a broad and inclusive global consultation process;

(d) Encouraged Member States to continue to implement the Framework and, in that regard, called for increased institutional coordination and collaboration between national statistical and geospatial agencies and other relevant stakeholders, especially in developing countries, to ensure more targeted interventions on, and informed understanding of, socioeconomic data within a geospatial context;

(e) Noted the revised terms of reference of the Expert Group and its workplan for the period 2020–2022, and welcomed its continuing efforts to provide guidance to Member States to support the adoption and implementation of the Framework, including continuing the development of key statistical standards and processes to strengthen the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

51/124

Open data

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Working Group on Open Data,⁴⁰ and expressed appreciation for the work of the Group;

(b) Welcomed the proposed guidance on the application of the principle that data are open, by default, in the context of official statistics, including open data licences as a priority in the pursuance of open data, and requested its further development and clarification in relation to the Fundamental Principles of Official

³⁹ E/CN.3/2020/25.

⁴⁰ E/CN.3/2020/26.

Statistics,⁴¹ in particular Principle 6 on the protection of statistical confidentiality, and in conformity with national laws and regulations;

(c) Took note of the need to streamline user engagement and user feedback in the design of open data strategies of national statistical offices to develop an open data culture and the importance of developing further guidance on the incorporation of open data and interoperability across statistical business processes;

(d) Welcomed the guidance and good practices provided by the Working Group on the dissemination of local-level statistics as open data by national statistical offices, and encouraged its further development;

(e) Approved the proposed terms of reference, including the definition of objectives and tasks, membership and methods of work, as contained in the annex to the report, with the recommendation that the Working Group ensure that its membership reflect equitable geographic representation, and asked the Working Group to report back to the Commission at its fifty-third session.

51/125

Working methods of the Statistical Commission

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Bureau on working methods: towards more coordinated and coherent structure and functions of groups,⁴² and accompanying background documents;

(b) Warmly thanked the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics for its significant contribution to the field, recognized that it had fulfilled its original mandate and reiterated its decision to dissolve it;

(c) Thanked the Chairs of groups for their responses to the consultation on governance, and acknowledged the actions taken by the secretariat and the groups in response to its decision on working methods, as adopted by the Commission at its fiftieth session;

(d) Commended the groups that had established formal means of engagement, and encouraged all groups that were currently active to follow suit;

(e) Welcomed the potential linkages identified by the Chairs of groups, presented in a background document, and encouraged groups to reach out to one another and realize or advance those natural synergies;

(f) Highlighted the efforts being carried out in the economic pillar, and requested the Chairs of groups in the environmental, social and cross-cutting pillars to initiate similar self-assessments as soon as possible;

(g) Reiterated that a streamlined architecture, an improved oversight function and greater synergies among groups and pillars were needed, and noted that the number of types of groups could be reduced;

(h) Endorsed, in that connection, the reference framework formulated by the Bureau as useful and flexible guidelines for existing and future groups, in terms of naming conventions, duration, timelines, periodic reporting, key elements for web pages, core technical focus, outputs, activities and membership;

⁴¹ General Assembly resolution 68/261.

⁴² E/CN.3/2020/27.

(i) Requested the Chairs of each active group to thoroughly review the reference framework, and encouraged them to make the relevant modifications and to strive to achieve equitable geographical distribution;

(j) Decided to allocate an explicit time frame to each group it established, as described in the framework;

(k) Requested the Chairs of each active group to maintain an updated web page containing, at a minimum, the group's mandate and terms of reference, the year it was established and information concerning its secretariat, members, Chair(s), meetings, reports to the Commission and points of contact.

51/126

World Statistics Day

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary General on World Statistics Day,⁴³ and thanked the Bureau and the secretariat for the preparations made thus far for World Statistics Day 2020, in particular the slogan "Connecting the world with data we can trust", which is globally relevant, as well as the logo presented;

(b) Took note of planned national, regional and subregional events and requested the secretariat to continue the preparations for World Statistics Day 2020 by promoting national, regional and global events on the dedicated website⁴⁴ and appropriate social media and by taking into account suggestions made during the discussion.

51/127

Work programme of the Statistics Division

The Statistical Commission took note of the oral report presented by the Director of the Statistics Division concerning the work programme of the Division, including the current activities, plans and priorities of the Division. It requested the Bureau to review substantively the programme proposals for 2021.

51/128

Information items

The Commission took note of the following reports and the pertinent comments on some of them:

Report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities⁴⁵

Report of the Secretary-General on policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission⁴⁶

Report of the Secretary-General on short-term economic statistics⁴⁷

⁴³ E/CN.3/2020/28.

⁴⁴ Available at <https://worldstatisticsday.org/>.

⁴⁵ E/CN.3/2020/6.

⁴⁶ E/CN.3/2020/29.

⁴⁷ E/CN.3/2020/30.

Report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indices⁴⁸

Report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics⁴⁹

Report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics⁵⁰

Joint report of the Secretary-General, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and international agencies on disability statistics⁵¹

Report of the United Nations Development Programme on the statistics of human development⁵²

⁴⁸ [E/CN.3/2020/31.](#)

⁴⁹ [E/CN.3/2020/32.](#)

⁵⁰ [E/CN.3/2020/33.](#)

⁵¹ [E/CN.3/2020/34.](#)

⁵² [E/CN.3/2020/35.](#)

Chapter II

Items for discussion and decision

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st to 8th meetings, on 3 to 6 March 2020. At its 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised (see chap. I, sect. A). At its 8th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission took action on all related draft decisions (draft decisions 51/101 to 51/126) contained in an informal paper introduced by the Rapporteur under item 3 of its agenda (see chap. I, sec. C).

A. Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2. The Commission considered item 3 (a) of its agenda at its 1st, 2nd and 8th meetings, on 3 and 6 March 2020. At its 1st meeting, on 3 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (E/CN.3/2020/2), the report of the Secretary-General on the work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.3/2020/3) 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.3/2020/4). The Commission considered those reports in turn.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 3 March, the Commission heard a statement by the observer for Sweden, who introduced the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 14 States members of the Commission and 22 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 4 international organizations.

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 3 March, the Commission continued its consideration of the sub-item and heard a statement by the Chief of the Development Data Section of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, who introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 6 States members of the Commission and 12 observer States.

5. At the same meeting, the Commission heard a statement under item 3 (a) by the observer for Angola, who introduced the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 6 States members of the Commission and 11 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

B. Coordination of statistical programmes

6. The Commission considered item 3 (b) of its agenda at its 2nd, 4th, 7th and 8th meetings, on 3, 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 2nd meeting, on 3 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System on coordination within the United Nations statistical system (E/CN.3/2020/5) and heard a statement by the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund, who introduced the report. The Commission also had before it the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (E/CN.3/2020/6).

7. At its 4th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission continued its consideration of the sub-item. At the two meetings, statements were made by the representatives of 12 States members of the Commission and 19 observer States.

8. At its 7th meeting, on 6th March, the Commission considered a draft resolution. Statements were made by the representatives of 7 States members of the Commission and 13 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

C. Future of economic statistics

9. The Commission considered item 3 (c) of its agenda at its 3rd and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 3rd meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/7](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of Canada, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 9 States members of the Commission and 13 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

D. National accounts

10. The Commission considered item 3 (d) of its agenda at its 3rd and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 3rd meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts ([E/CN.3/2020/8](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of Eurostat, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 10 States members of the Commission and 20 observer States.

E. International trade and business statistics

11. The Commission considered item 3 (e) of its agenda at its 3rd and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 3rd meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the joint report of the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics and the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/9](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the Netherlands, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 4 States members of the Commission and 10 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

F. Price Statistics

12. The Commission considered item 3 (f) of its agenda at its 3rd, 4th and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 3rd meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/10](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the World Bank, who introduced the report.

13. At the 4th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission continued its consideration of item 3 (f). At the two meetings, discussions on the sub-item were held by the representatives of 5 States members of the Commission and 12 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

G. International Comparison Programme

14. The Commission considered item 3 (g) of its agenda at its 4th and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 4th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the World Bank on the International Comparison Programme ([E/CN.3/2020/11](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the World Bank, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 5 States members of the Commission and 16 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

H. Environmental-economic accounting

15. The Commission considered item 3 (h) of its agenda at its 4th and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 4th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting ([E/CN.3/2020/12](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the Netherlands, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 5 States members of the Commission and 15 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

I. Agricultural and rural statistics

16. The Commission considered item 3 (i) of its agenda at its 4th and 8th meetings, on 4 and 6 March 2020. At its 4th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on recent developments in agricultural and rural statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/13](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 3 States members of the Commission and 17 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

J. Demographic statistics

17. The Commission considered item 3 (j) of its agenda at its 5th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 5th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas for international comparison purposes ([E/CN.3/2020/14](#)) and heard a statement by the Chief of the Demographic Statistics Section of the Statistics Division, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 10 States members of the Commission and 24 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 5 international organizations.

K. Civil registration and vital statistics

18. The Commission considered item 3 (k) of its agenda at its 5th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 5th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the introduction of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda: a holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management ([E/CN.3/2020/15](#)) and heard a statement by the Chief of the Demographic Statistics Section of the Statistics Division, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 5 States members of the

Commission and 11 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

L. Health statistics

19. The Commission considered item 3 (l) of its agenda at its 5th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 5th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the World Health Organization on health statistics and strengthening statistical systems to track the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.3/2020/16) and heard a statement by the representative of the World Health Organization, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of five States members of the Commission and three observer States.

M. Gender statistics

20. The Commission considered item 3 (m) of its agenda at its 5th, 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 5th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on gender statistics (E/CN.3/2020/17) and heard a statement by the Chief of the Social and Gender Statistics Section of the Statistics Division, who introduced the report.

21. At the 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission continued its consideration of item 3 (m). At the two meetings, statements were made by the representatives of 9 States members of the Commission and 16 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

N. Refugee statistics

22. The Commission considered item 3 (n) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (E/CN.3/2020/18) and heard a statement by the observer for Norway, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of eight States members of the Commission and nine observer States, as well as by the representatives of four international organizations.

O. Governance, peace and security statistics

23. The Commission considered item 3 (o) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics (E/CN.3/2020/19) and heard a statement by the observer for Cabo Verde, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 6 States members of the Commission and 12 observer States, as well as by the representatives of 2 international organizations.

P. Regional statistical development

24. The Commission considered item 3 (p) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on cooperation for regional statistical development (E/CN.3/2020/20) and heard a

statement by the representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of three States members of the Commission and five observer States, as well as by the representatives of three international organizations.

Q. Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

25. The Commission considered item 3 (q) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Friends of the Chair group on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/21](#)), and heard a statement by the observer for New Zealand, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 6 States members of the Commission and 10 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

R. Management and modernization of statistical systems

26. The Commission considered item 3 (r) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on management and modernization of statistical systems ([E/CN.3/2020/22](#)) and heard a statement by the Inter-Regional Adviser of the Statistics Division, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 3 States members of the Commission and 10 observer States, as well as the representative of 1 international organization.

S. Information and communications technology statistics

27. The Commission considered item 3 (s) of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development ([E/CN.3/2020/23](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on behalf of the International Telecommunication Union, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of eight observer States, as well as by the representative of one international organization.

T. Big data

28. The Commission considered item 3 (t) of its agenda at its 6th, 7th and 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 March 2020. At its 6th meeting, on 5 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics ([E/CN.3/2020/24](#)) and heard a statement by the representative of Denmark, who introduced the report.

29. At the 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission continued its consideration of item 3 (t). Statements were made by the representatives of 6 States members of the Commission and 13 observer States.

U. Integration of statistical and geospatial information

30. The Commission considered item 3 (u) of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020. At its 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission had before it the

report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (E/CN.3/2020/25) and heard a statement by the observer for Namibia, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of five States members of the Commission and seven observer States, as well as by the representatives of three international organizations.

V. Open data

31. The Commission considered item 3 (v) of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020. At its 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Working Group on Open Data (E/CN.3/2020/26) and heard a statement by the observer for New Zealand, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of 3 States members of the Commission and 11 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.

W. Working methods of the Statistical Commission

32. The Commission considered item 3 (w) of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020. At its 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Bureau on working methods: towards more coordinated and coherent structure and functions of groups (E/CN.3/2020/27) and heard a statement by the Chair, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of two States members of the Commission and five observer States, as well as by the representative of one international organization.

X. World Statistics Day

33. The Commission considered item 3 (x) of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020. At its 7th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on World Statistics Day (E/CN.3/2020/28) and heard a statement by the representative of the Office of the Director of the Statistics Division, who introduced the report. Thereafter, statements were made by the representatives of one State member of the Commission and six observer States, as well as by the representatives of two international organizations.

Chapter III

Items for information

1. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020.
2. At the 7th meeting, on 6 March, statements were made by the representatives of two States members of the Commission and five observer States, as well as by the representative of one international organization.
3. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of all the reports under items for information (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 51/128, also see chap. VII, para. 7).

Chapter IV

Programme questions (Statistics Division)

1. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 8th meeting, on 6 March 2020, and, in that context, heard an oral report by the Director of the Statistics Division concerning the current activities, plans and priorities of the Division.
2. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the oral report presented by the Director of the Statistics Division concerning the current activities, plans and priorities of the Division. The Commission requested the Bureau to review substantively the programme proposals for 2021 (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 51/127).

Chapter V

Provisional agenda and dates for the fifty-second session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 8th meeting, on 6 March 2020. It had before it the following documents, which were introduced by a representative of the Office of the Director of the Statistics Division:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the draft provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-second session of the Commission ([E/CN.3/2020/L.2](#));

(b) Note by the Secretariat on the draft multi-year programme of work of the Statistical Commission, 2020–2024 ([E/CN.3/2020/36](#)).

2. At its 8th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission approved the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-second session, as outlined in document [E/CN.3/2020/L.2](#), and entrusted the Bureau with streamlining and finalizing it. The Commission also decided to recommend the provisional agenda to the Economic and Social Council for approval (see chap. I, sect. B).

3. At the same meeting, the Commission decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that its fifty-second session be held from 2 to 5 March 2021 (see chap. I, sect. B).

4. Also at the same meeting, the Commission approved its draft multi-year programme of work for 2020–2024 ([E/CN.3/2020/36](#)).

Chapter VI

Report of the Commission on its fifty-first session

1. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March 2020.
2. At the 8th meeting, on 6 March, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Commission on its fifty-first session ([E/CN.3/2020/L.3](#)), together with a two-part informal paper containing a draft resolution and the draft decisions.
3. At the same meeting, statements were made on the text of the draft decisions by the representatives of 7 States members of the Commission and 16 observer States, as well as by the representative of 1 international organization.
4. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 6 March, the Commission adopted the draft report on its fifty-first session, including the draft resolution and decisions contained therein, as orally revised, and entrusted the Rapporteur with streamlining and finalizing it.

Chapter VII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Statistical Commission held its fifty-first session at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 6 March 2020. The Commission held eight meetings.

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by the representatives of the 24 States members of the Commission. Also in attendance were observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-Member States, representatives of United Nations system organizations and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations. A list of participants is contained in document [E/CN.3/2020/INF/1](#).

C. Election of officers

3. At its 1st meeting, on 3 March, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chair:

Shigeru Kawasaki (Japan)

Vice-Chairs:

Irina Kangro (Belarus)

Julio Alfonso Santaella Castell (Mexico)

Anil Arora (Canada)

Rapporteur:

Osman Sankoh (Sierra Leone)

D. Agenda and organization of work

4. At its 1st meeting, on 3 March, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document [E/CN.3/2020/1](#).

5. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the provisional programme of work and timetable of the session ([E/CN.3/2020/L.1](#)).

6. Also at the same meeting, the Commission invited the following intergovernmental organizations to participate as observers at its fifty-first session: the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics; the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre; the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa; and the European Free Trade Association.

E. Documentation

7. The documents before the Commission at its fifty-first session are available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents>.
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