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## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-fifth session

New York, 27 February–1 March 2024

Item 3 (e) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for discussion and decision: governance statistics**

## Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2023/325 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, which is submitted to the Commission for discussion and decision.

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\* [E/CN.3/2024/1](#).



## Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

### I. Background

1. The report on governance, peace and security statistics ([E/CN.3/2015/17](#)), submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session, contained a proposal to establish the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. At that session, the Commission endorsed the creation of the Group ([E/2015/24](#), decision 46/111). The Group subsequently submitted reports to the Commission at its forty-seventh (2016), forty-ninth (2018), fifty-first (2020) and fifty-third (2022) sessions. The present report has been prepared for submission to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, to be held in 2024.

2. At its fifty-first session, which marked the end of the first term of the Praia Group, the Commission 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 encouraged the monitoring and implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 ([E/2020/2](#), decision 51/117). In the same decision, the Commission supported the continuation of the Praia Group 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.

3. At its fifty-third session, the Commission acknowledged and supported the work of the Praia Group and expressed its appreciation for the guidance note on governance statistics in the area of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) ([E/2022/24](#), decision 53/128). In the same decision, the Commission, noting that there were methodological aspects in the production of governance statistics that required more attention, supported the workplan of the Praia Group for the period 2020–2025 and its three pillars: (a) improving and standardizing methodologies to measure governance; (b) strengthening the capacities of statistical offices to produce reliable statistics on governance; and (c) advocacy to increase the demand for governance statistics and mobilize national and international resources to facilitate producing those statistics. Also in decision 53/128, the Commission, in particular, welcomed the establishment of the task team on non-discrimination and equality and the task team on participation in political and public affairs, supported their workplans, encouraged broad participation, especially from African countries, in the work of those task teams and supported the establishment of additional task teams on other dimensions of governance that required further methodological work, while ensuring synergies and coordination with other relevant workstreams.

4. At its fifty-fourth session, the Statistical Commission welcomed the explicit inclusion of the topic of governance statistics and human rights in the revised Classification of Statistical Activities, which was endorsed as an international standard classification ([E/2023/24](#), decision 54/112). The new domain on governance statistics (domain 4) is aligned with the handbook on governance statistics developed by the Praia Group. The statistical areas in this domain follow the general structure agreed by the Group.

5. In the present report, the Praia Group provides a summary of its recent activities and accomplishments since the issuance of its previous report, submitted to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-third session in 2022 ([E/CN.3/2022/29](#)), with a particular focus on the methodological work carried out by the task teams on non-discrimination and equality and on participation in political and public affairs.

The Group sets out priority areas of work for the two years remaining before the end of its mandate, in 2025, and outlines a proposed future direction of work in the field of governance statistics beyond 2025.

## II. Recent activities

### A. Pillar 1: Improving and standardizing methodologies to measure governance

6. In line with the request made by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session and consistent with the demand expressed by members, the Praia Group committed in its second term to supporting the development of standardized methodologies for dimensions of governance that are methodologically less advanced. This led to the creation in November 2021 of two task teams, one on non-discrimination and equality and the other on participation in political and public affairs, whose aim is to advance the development of international statistical guidance, standards and instruments for measuring these two dimensions. Each task team is working on the development of two products: (a) a model survey questionnaire with core and optional questions and (b) a guide on the collection and use of administrative data to produce statistics on discrimination and participation. Each team has more than 100 members, including national statistics offices, international and regional organizations, research institutions and civil society organizations.

#### **Praia Group task team on participation in political and public affairs**

7. The task team on participation in political and public affairs is chaired by the national statistical offices of Norway and Tunisia and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). After the team's establishment in November 2021, a total of seven meetings were held in the design phase (2022), which were attended by 149 distinct participants (53 per cent of whom were representatives of national statistical offices).

8. Building on the conceptual and measurement framework proposed in the handbook on governance statistics, the framework elaborated by the task team on participation refers to the following seven dimensions:

- (a) Participation in electoral processes and referendums;
- (b) Participation in political and civic life;
- (c) Representation and participation in political office;
- (d) Representation in judicial bodies;
- (e) Representation in bodies of public service/public administration;
- (f) Representation in informal governance bodies;
- (g) Enabling environment of participation.

9. The model questionnaire on participation focuses on electoral participation, other forms of participation in political and civic life (beyond elections) and the enabling environment of participation. The questionnaire is envisioned as a post-election survey and aims at being applicable across the variety of electoral registration systems in place across the world. Detailed instructions are provided on how to adapt selected questions, depending on the type of voting registration system in place.

10. In 2023, Statistics Norway conducted an initial expert appraisal of the draft questionnaire. Following this review, seven national statistical offices (those of Brazil, Colombia, Mali, Mexico, the Niger, Norway and South Africa) contributed further to the revision of the draft questionnaire. The revised questionnaire underwent two rounds of cognitive testing by statistical offices in different regions, different languages and different development contexts, including in Cabo Verde, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (South Kivu), Nigeria, Norway and Slovakia. At the end of 2023, the task team reconvened to review and discuss the cognitive testing results.

11. The task team on participation is developing guidance on the use of administrative data, including on how to leverage the vast amount of information produced by electoral management bodies through their core activities as the basis for statistics on electoral and political participation. Based on mapping of experiences across different regions, practical guidance will be provided on the use of electoral registers and related data systems for statistical production, in particular on voter registration, voter turnout, candidates and elected candidates, and on the integration of electoral administrative data in national statistical systems.

### **Praia Group task team on non-discrimination and equality**

12. The task team on non-discrimination and equality is co-chaired by the national statistical offices of Finland and Peru and supported by UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). After its establishment in November 2021, the task team held a total of nine webinars in the design phase (2022), which were attended by 265 distinct participants (51 per cent of whom were representatives of national statistical offices).

13. The conceptual and measurement framework elaborated by the task team on discrimination builds on the framework outlined in the handbook on governance statistics and identifies the following six dimensions:

- (a) Experiences and perceptions of discrimination and harassment;
- (b) Experiences of hate crimes and hate speech;
- (c) Reporting and sentencing of discrimination, harassment and hate crimes;
- (d) Attitudes towards minority groups;
- (e) Promotion of equality and non-discrimination;
- (f) Indirect discrimination/inequalities in outcomes.

14. The model questionnaire on discrimination covers the perceived and actual prevalence of discrimination, the prevalence of hate crimes and hate speech, public awareness and assessment of national efforts aimed at fighting discrimination and promoting equality, and public attitudes towards groups at risk of discrimination.

15. In 2023, the draft questionnaire was shared with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for expert appraisal. The revised questionnaire then underwent two rounds of cognitive testing by statistical offices in different regions, different languages and different social, economic and demographic contexts, including in Cabo Verde, Colombia, Ireland, Madagascar, Peru and Viet Nam. At the end of 2023, the task team reconvened to review and discuss the cognitive testing results.

16. The task team on discrimination is developing guidance on how to strengthen the collection and use of a wide range of administrative data to better measure and monitor trends in discrimination and inequality across various sectors and on how to generate robust statistics to inform policymaking in this area. The task team has

identified several sources of administrative data from which discrimination and equality statistics can be derived, including police records and court records on active and concluded discrimination, harassment and hate crime cases, as well as on convictions. Recognizing that people, and particularly those in more vulnerable situations, might be reluctant to contact law enforcement authorities to report incidents, the task team is reviewing how data collected by organizations outside the formal justice system, such as complaints data collected by national equality bodies, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, legal aid schemes, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and similar entities, can be integrated into national statistical systems. Guidance will be provided on how data sets compiled by service provision institutions in different sectors can be used for equality analysis across different population groups.

17. The task team is currently mapping good practices and challenges faced around the world in collecting administrative data on non-discrimination and equality, starting with European, Latin American and African regions in 2023 and additional regions in 2024.

#### **Praia Group membership meeting**

18. The Praia Group held its 2023 membership meeting on 3 October with nearly 100 members connecting virtually to take stock of the work of the Praia Group undertaken since the start of its second term and to discuss the way forward. Specifically, the meeting aimed at achieving three main objectives: (a) to discuss what the adoption of governance as a new domain of the international Classification of Statistical Activities means for national statistics offices; (b) to update members on the progress made in implementing the workplan for the period 2020–2025 and invite feedback, particularly on pillar 1 (methodological work) with respect to the work of the two task teams, on participation and discrimination; and (c) to seek feedback from members on priority areas of work for the Praia Group in the two years remaining before the end of its second term and on its future direction. The discussions included exploration of potential new task teams to advance methodological work on other dimensions of governance. The secretariat presented options for the future direction of the Praia Group, including a potential transition at the end of its current mandate.

### **B. Pillar 2: Strengthening the capacities of statistical offices to produce reliable statistics on governance**

19. The capacity development activities of the Praia Group since 2022 have focused primarily on building the capacities of national statistical offices to undertake the cognitive testing of the draft questionnaires. In 2023, five virtual training sessions were held to introduce participating offices to two cognitive testing methods, namely, semi-structured interviews, including both think-aloud sequences and cognitive probes; and more structured, protocol-based cognitive interviews, including behaviour coding.

### **C. Pillar 3: Advocacy to increase the demand for governance statistics and mobilize national and international resources to facilitate producing those statistics**

#### **Praia Group events**

20. On 17 February 2023, the Praia Group hosted a virtual side event in the run-up to the fifty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission. Entitled “Pushing the frontiers of governance statistics”, the event convened high-level representatives of

national statistical offices operating in a diversity of contexts (Statistics Finland, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico, Statistics South Africa and the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf) to share views on the relevance and importance of investing in governance statistics at this point in time and to explore where the priorities may be for the further development and implementation of international standards and guidance on governance statistics.

21. On 30 June 2023, the Praia Group hosted a webinar on a new statistical framework for measuring corruption developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). At the event, experiences in implementing the framework were discussed and national statistical offices were encouraged to take an active role and collaborate with relevant national institutions, civil society and academia in implementing the framework.

#### **Publications of the Praia Group**

22. Following the adoption of the updated Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0), which integrates governance as a new domain of official statistics and recognizes human rights as a new cross-cutting domain of official statistics, the Praia Group secretariat coordinated the preparation of a brief, entitled “Governance now a domain in the revised classification of statistical activities (CSA 2.0): what’s next for governance statistics?”, on leveraging CSA 2.0 to enhance the production of governance statistics. The brief highlights the need for work to continue in earnest on the development of international statistical guidance, standards and instruments for measuring all dimensions of governance and describes a possible role for the Praia Group in mobilizing resources for a strong, coordinated effort to help consolidate this new statistical domain.

### **D. Renewal of the Praia Group steering committee**

23. In 2023, the Praia Group, having reached the midpoint of its second term, issued an open call for expressions of interest in filling four vacant seats on its steering committee. The Praia Group steering committee is currently composed of the national statistical offices of Cabo Verde, Finland, Mexico and Nigeria, UNDP, OHCHR, UNODC, the Research Institute for Development (Institut de recherche pour le développement), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank.

## **III. Priority areas of work until the end of the current mandate of the Praia Group**

24. In 2024–2025, the Praia Group will continue the methodological work initiated by the two task teams, on participation in political and public affairs and non-discrimination and equality. The questionnaires will be further revised in early 2024 based on the results of the cognitive tests and national statistical offices will be invited in 2024 to pilot (field-test) the revised questionnaires. A workshop for discussing the piloting results and jointly finalizing the two questionnaires is planned for the end of 2024.

25. In early 2025, the Praia Group, with the support of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, intends to hold a global consultation with all States Members of the United Nations and international entities on the products developed by the task teams (namely, the two survey questionnaires,

along with implementation guidance, and the two guides on the use of administrative data for statistics on discrimination and participation).

26. The Praia Group will submit the revised products to the Statistical Commission for approval at its fifty-seventh session, in March 2026, when the Praia Group concludes its second term and delivers its next report to the Commission.

27. With regard to advocacy and awareness-raising on the methodological work carried out by the task teams, the Praia Group plans to increase its engagement with the international statistical community, notably at regional level, by participating in regional statistical meetings.

28. UNDP continues to support the Praia Group with technical and financial support. UN-Women and OHCHR have provided additional contributions in support of the work of the task teams. In 2024, with the support of UNDP, the steering committee plans to develop a resource mobilization strategy to support the effective implementation of priority activities of the Praia Group until the end of its current term.

29. The Praia Group intends to continue ongoing consultations with the membership regarding future directions of work in the field of governance statistics beyond 2025.

#### **IV. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

30. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To acknowledge and support the activities of the Praia Group undertaken in 2022–2023;**

(b) **To express its views on the priority areas of work identified for the remainder of the period of the current mandate of the Praia Group (2024–2025).**