



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 December 2025

Original: English

Statistical Commission

Fifty-seventh session

New York, 3–6 March 2026

Item 3 (k) of the provisional agenda*

**Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Joint report of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2025/315 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the joint report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is submitted to the Commission for discussion and decision.

* [E/CN.3/2026/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. As mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/1](#), the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators was tasked with the development and implementation of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The global indicator framework developed by the Expert Group was adopted by the Assembly in its resolution [71/313](#) on the work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda.
2. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was established at the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission. In its decision 46/101 (see [E/2015/24](#)), the Commission tasked the High-level Group with providing strategic leadership for the implementation process related to the Sustainable Development Goals as it concerned statistical monitoring and reporting and fostering partnership, coordination and statistical capacity-building.
3. The present report is the joint report of both Groups and describes the work carried out by the Groups in 2025. Section II contains the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Section III contains the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Action to be taken by the Commission is set out in section IV.

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

4. This section provides a description of the work carried out by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in 2025, on the basis of the work programme agreed upon by the Commission and in accordance with Commission decision 56/105 (see [E/2025/24](#)). Section II.A contains a summary of the work on the implementation of the global indicator framework by the Expert Group. Section II.B presents the activities and workplans of the working groups on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) and geospatial information and of the task team on lessons learned from the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Section II.C provides the work programme of the Expert Group for 2026.

A. Implementation of the global indicator framework

5. In 2025, the Expert Group held seven virtual member meetings. It also held one virtual open meeting in February, focused on the outcomes of the 2025 comprehensive review of the indicator framework and lessons learned from the global indicator framework for the post-2030 Agenda.¹
6. The Expert Group held its sixteenth in-person meeting from 5 to 7 November 2025 in Kitakyushu, Japan, hosted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan and the city of Kitakyushu. The meeting was attended by more than 90 participants, including representatives of Member States, international and regional agencies and entities and other stakeholders. At the meeting, participants:

¹ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-side-event-UNSC56/>.

(a) Exchanged knowledge, shared country experiences and addressed technical and methodological issues related to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the global indicator framework;

(b) Reviewed the work of the working groups of the Expert Group and the task team on lessons learned for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Updated the tier classification on the basis of the annual review of data availability;

(d) Reviewed proposed metadata updates; and agreed on the 2026 workplan of the Expert Group.

7. The meeting also featured an expanded programme, with parallel sessions on artificial intelligence and emerging data innovations for the Sustainable Development Goals, data disaggregation and inclusion, data communication and lessons from national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, plenary sessions included a special focus on climate and environmental indicators, reflections on the final five years of Goal monitoring, data financing and the post-2030 agenda.

8. Pursuant to its terms of reference, there was a rotation of the members of the Expert Group in June 2025. The current members are Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belize, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Norway, Oman, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Spain, Tunisia and Vanuatu.

9. Denise Kronemberger (Brazil), who had been elected in January 2024, and Cara Williams (Canada), who had been elected in February 2021, served as Co-Chairs of the Group throughout the first half of 2025. Following the decision of Ms. Williams to step down as Co-Chair in June 2025, Live Margrethe Rognerud (Norway) was elected as the new Co-Chair during the June rotation.

1. Methodology review of the indicator framework and tier classification updates

10. In accordance with its approved work programme, the Expert Group conducted a review of the availability of data for all indicators in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database (as at November 2025). The review was presented at the sixteenth meeting. Four indicators met the criteria for being reclassified to tier I, namely, indicators 5.b.1 and 5.c.1 (from tier II) and 1.a.2 and 6.2.1 (from multiple tiers). In addition, indicator 1.b.1 met the criteria for partial upgrade and was classified as a multiple-tier indicator (tier I/tier II), and indicator 16.7.1 part b met the criteria for upgrade, so the indicator remained a multiple-tier indicator (tier I (a, b)/tier II (c)).

11. As from November 2025, pursuant to the updates to the tier classification following the reviews, of the 234 unique indicators (further to the 2025 comprehensive review), 165 are tier I indicators, 61 are tier II indicators, and 8 are multi-tier indicators (i.e. different components of the indicator are classified in different tiers). This marks a significant improvement as compared with December 2019, when, of the 232 indicators (prior to the 2020 comprehensive review), 116 were tier I indicators, 92 were tier II indicators, 20 were tier III indicators, and 4 were classified as multiple tier indicators. The secretariat will update the tier classification on an annual basis following the review of the availability of data for tier I and II indicators and post the latest information on the relevant web page.²

² See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>.

12. As at October 2025, the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database included data for 232 of the 234 unique indicators and 3.3 million data records. There remain two unique indicators without any data. Data for indicator 5.2.2 are projected to be submitted by December 2025, and data for indicator 11.c.1 are expected to be submitted by December 2025.

2. Proposed annual refinements

13. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [71/313](#) and the plan and criteria agreed by the Expert Group with respect to possible annual minor refinements ([E/CN.3/2017/2](#), para. 21), the Expert Group reviewed the list of indicator refinements proposed by its members and by custodian agencies and agreed on four refinements with regard to indicators 2.2.4, 3.8.2, 13.2.1 and 13.b.1 (see annex I) to be presented to the Commission for its consideration.

3. Metadata review

14. One of the tasks of the Expert Group is to regularly review methodological developments and issues related to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and their metadata. In 2025, the group reviewed the revised metadata for seven indicators³ and invited custodian agencies to the regular virtual member meetings to present and clarify the updates.

4. Sharing of experiences and good practices on monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

15. As part of its approved workplan, the Expert Group is tasked with focusing on the implementation of the indicator framework and the sharing of experiences and good practices on monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, including: improving the availability of data for the Goal indicators; the use of non-traditional and innovative data sources for the indicators; capacity-building needs for monitoring of the Goals; data disaggregation and inclusive data; communication and data storytelling; and platforms, dashboards, portals and other progress assessment tools related to the Goals. In line with the workplan, the Expert Group invited countries, agencies and stakeholders to elaborate on different initiatives for addressing those areas during their open meetings. In addition, the Expert Group conducted a fifth round of a survey to gather short descriptions from countries and regional commissions that showcase good practices in those areas. As at 19 November 2025, 80 countries had responded to the questionnaire, providing short summaries in which they showcased good practices and provided links to websites and other information or materials and comments related to challenges or suggestions for the Expert Group.

16. With the five rounds of questionnaires sent in annually from 2021 to 2025, a total of 118 countries have provided inputs. In the latest round of responses, 7 respondents reported for the first time, while 73 respondents provided updates. The SDG Good Practices wiki site⁴ will be updated regularly and will serve as a living document for countries and regional commissions to use as a point of reference and resource repository.

5. Capacity-building

17. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, custodian agencies, regional commissions and other development partners support the

³ Indicators 3.1.1, 5.a.2, 13.2.1/ 13.b.1 (with slight amendment), 13.2.2, 13.a.1, 17.14.1 and 14.c.1.

⁴ See <https://unstats.un.org/wiki/spaces/sdgGoodPractices/overview>.

implementation of the global indicator framework and the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda through a wide range of capacity-building activities. These include technical workshops, e-learning courses, voluntary national review-related trainings, knowledge-sharing and capacity development efforts carried out under initiatives such as Data for Now, the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistics, the Collaborative on Citizen Data, the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians and the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training. Further details on capacity-building activities carried out by the Statistics Division and its partners are available in the report of the Secretary-General on work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.3/2026/13).

B. Workstream on data disaggregation, working groups and the task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

18. In 2025, the Expert Group continued its workstream on data disaggregation. Work was also carried out by the two working groups focusing on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) and geospatial information. A new task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals was established in March 2025. The working groups and the task team are composed of members of the Expert Group and other invited representatives, as set out in their respective terms of reference.⁵

1. Workstream for data disaggregation

19. Under the guidance of the Expert Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, the Statistics Division finalized the guidance document *Geospatial Small Area Estimation in R*,⁶ developed in partnership with the World Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as a step-by-step companion to *Small Area Estimation with Geospatial Data: A Primer*.⁷ The Statistics Division has continued training on small area estimation through eLearning courses and workshops, in collaboration with the World Bank and regional commissions, including ECA, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and ESCAP. The Statistics Division also coordinated support for data integration modelling, including using small area estimation, to produce population estimates for Jamaica, in collaboration with the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, the POPGRID Data Collaborative, the Statistics Division of ECLAC and other partners, with final estimates released in October 2025.

20. In addition, as mentioned in section II.A.4, the Expert Group has invited countries, regional commissions and international agencies to share their good practices on data disaggregation, which have been included in the Sustainable Development Goal Good Practices wiki site. The Expert Group also asked its working group on geospatial information to provide guidance on data disaggregation by geographic location (see section II.B.3).

⁵ The terms of reference, membership and other important information regarding each working group are available at <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>.

⁶ <https://escap-sd.github.io/geospatialSAEhowto/>.

⁷ Submitted as a background document to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-sixth session: https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_56/documents/BG-3p-Geospatial_SAE_Primer-E.pdf.

2. Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

21. The Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators consists of representatives of 12 Member States and 10 international agencies and is currently chaired by Mexico. The Working Group conducts regular virtual meetings, as well as in-person meetings in the margins of global SDMX events.

22. The Working Group has continued to maintain global Sustainable Development Goal data and metadata structure definitions, including routine updates and those in connection with the 2025 comprehensive review. The data and metadata structure definitions are actively used for data exchange and dissemination by national statistical offices, Sustainable Development Goal custodian agencies, regional commissions and other organizations.

23. More than 45 per cent of the content of the global Sustainable Development Goal database is now transmitted as SDMX data sets. The voluntary provision of data sets on the Goals by Member States has continued, and some regional commissions have also established SDMX-based data exchanges with their member States. The global data set for the Sustainable Development Goals and the related metadata are available in SDMX format through application programming interfaces maintained by the Statistics Division. The Working Group has continued to contribute to the development of the popular Open SDG dissemination platform, maintained by the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which supports the data and metadata structure definitions for the Sustainable Development Goals and is actively used by Member States.

24. The Working Group has continued to coordinate capacity-building activities in SDMX for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators conducted by the Statistics Division and its partners. As part of a European Union-funded project led by ECA and implemented jointly with the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom, the African Development Bank Group and the Statistics Division, extensive capacity-building was provided to five countries in the African region. The countries published their Sustainable Development Goal indicators at SDMX-based application programming interfaces, which were then used to supply data to these countries' Open SDG platforms, avoiding duplication of effort and upholding the principle of single source of truth. Capacity-building continued in the Arab region as part of a Statistics Division-ESCWA initiative, leading to improved and expanded Sustainable Development Goal data exchange and dissemination. Capacity-building was also provided by the Statistics Division to the Central Asian and South Caucasus regions. Altogether, more than 30 countries received capacity-building and technical assistance in SDMX for the Goal indicators in 2025, facilitating the establishment of national platforms for the dissemination of data and metadata for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as data exchange.

25. Priorities for 2026 include the development of advanced validation using the Validation and Transformation Language (VTL), improved geospatial support, improvements to data exchange with the regional commissions and increased capacity-building.

3. Working Group on Geospatial Information

26. The Working Group on Geospatial Information,⁸ chaired by Ireland and Colombia, comprises 13 member States, 9 custodian agencies, representatives of three regional

⁸ See <https://ggim.un.org/UNGGIM-wg6/>.

commissions and other invited groups and experts. The Working Group convenes regular virtual meetings and biennial plenary meetings, formally reporting to the Expert Group. Owing to the complementary and cross-cutting nature of the 2030 Agenda, the working group also contributed to a report (E/C.20/2025/10/Add.1), with the Secretariat, to the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, under the agenda item entitled “Geospatial information for sustainable development”.

27. In implementing its workplan for 2025, the Working Group has continued to develop its story map,⁹ promoting its paper “Rescuing the SDGs with geospatial information: how geospatial information can transform the production, measurement, monitoring and dissemination of SDG indicators”¹⁰ and showcasing examples of national good practice in the production, measurement and monitoring of Goal indicators. Specifically, the story map highlights the role and contribution of geospatial information in countries for Goal 1 (Colombia), Goal 3 (Republic of Ireland), Goal 4 (Indonesia), Goal 11 (Canada, Japan and PLACE Foundation) and Goal 15 (Mexico, the World Meteorological Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)). In addition, Ireland as Co-Chair of the Working Group, is leading efforts within the Expert Group’s task team on localized geostatistical modelling (established in 2025) to improve Goal data production and dissemination, emphasizing geographic disaggregation. A report to the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management at its fifteenth session¹¹ discusses this in further detail.

28. In particular, the Working Group has focused on promoting the role of geospatial information for the Sustainable Development Goals through activities which include: bilateral meetings with countries on geospatial projects for inclusion in story maps as detailed above; meetings with FAO and the International Federation of Surveyors for feedback on the shortlist of Goal Indicators where geospatial information has a contribution;¹² participation in a webinar entitled “The nexus between Sustainable Development Goals and professional education in the geospatial world”; and participation in European Space Agency events to promote the workplan of the Working Group and collate examples of Goal indicators developed from geospatial data.

29. In its 2026 workplan,¹³ the Working Group aims to continue to enhance coherence and use of geospatial information for the Sustainable Development Goals. Key priorities include deepening collaboration with Sustainable Development Indicators Working Group of EuroStat,¹⁴ expanding on country case studies that illustrate geospatial contributions to Goal indicators, exploring innovative technologies and methodologies to enhance the production, reporting, monitoring and dissemination of Goal indicators, and hosting interactive webinars to highlight the role of geography and geospatial information in the global Goal indicator framework. The Working Group welcomes new members to support the delivery of its objectives and planned activities.

⁹ See <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a9bfa199b8c14f959b538d9a8898b8eb>.

¹⁰ See https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_56/documents/BG-3e-Rescuing-the-SDGs-with-Geospatial-Information-E.pdf.

¹¹ E/C.20/2025/12/Add.1, para. 20 (a). Available at https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/15th-Session/documents/E_C20_2025_12_Add.1.pdf.

¹² See https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/14th-Session/documents/Revised_Shortlist_results_of_the_analysis_of_the_%20SDG_GIF.pdf.

¹³ See https://ggim.un.org/documents/IAEG-SDGs_WGGI_WorkvPlan_2026.pdf.

¹⁴ See https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/922b4700-1c83-4099-b550-763badab3ec0/library/f2bbecb1-c602-4a81-89ad-2306e207ed90?p=1&n=10&sort=modified_DESC.

4. Task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

30. The task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission,¹⁵ was established in March 2025. The task team is chaired by Canada and the United Nations Development Programme. Its mandate is to systematically identify, analyse and document lessons learned from developing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goal monitoring framework to inform and enhance monitoring and reporting processes for future development agendas.

31. To ensure an inclusive and representative process, the task team comprises members of the Expert Group, other member States, United Nations regional commissions, custodian agencies, international and regional organizations and stakeholders with expertise and extensive direct experience in Goal monitoring and reporting, many participating in the initial establishment of the global indicator framework. The task team adopted its terms of reference,¹⁶ organizing its work into two distinct phases. The first phase, currently in progress, is focused on the global level, and the second phase (2026–2027) will be focused on thematic, regional and national-level lessons learned.

32. Since its establishment, the task team has convened six meetings and held an interactive session during the sixteenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to solicit feedback from participants on their experiences and recommendations. In addition, it has conducted consultations with the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and received inputs from the Working Group on Geospatial Information.

33. The task team presents the culmination of its work in this first phase in the background document entitled “*Towards post-2030: seeds for future global monitoring frameworks*”. The report is informed by an extensive review of existing literature and draws on the experience of task team members and their respective networks. The report synthesizes successes, lessons learned and persistent challenges and translates them into actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening processes, practices and standards related to the Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework and targeted for practitioners that will develop the post-2030 development agenda monitoring framework. These findings reflect a wide range of perspectives and experiences and focus on measurement, organizational arrangements, coordination and collaboration and communication and advocacy. It gives evidence of the relevant work that the statistical community has undertaken for Goal monitoring and highlights the importance of national statistical offices and systems to address the monitoring of the post-2030 Agenda.

34. During discussions related to the post-2030 agenda, members suggested that discussions on the future monitoring framework could explore the use of differentiated indicator tiers, further strengthen coherence between global and national monitoring frameworks and consider research on relationships among indicators – while ensuring that such work supports, rather than replaces, the policy relevance and diversity of the indicator set. Members emphasized that, in further monitoring efforts, particular attention should be paid to improving the clarity and usability of indicators and their metadata, so that policymakers and implementers can more easily understand, apply and act upon the information provided. The framework should also allow space to further invest in new domains, when essential and aligned with shared global priorities. They further underscored that building a more effective and resilient

¹⁵ See E/CN.3/2025/37, decision 56/105.

¹⁶ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/iaeg-sdgs-lessons-learned/IAEG-SDGs-Task-Team-on-Lessons-Learned-ToR.pdf>.

monitoring framework will require not only conceptual, methodological and technical work by statistical experts but also sustained high-level political commitment to ensure adequate resourcing, institutional coordination and long-term continuity. These exchanges reflected a shared view that different priorities need to be considered, including technical rigour, clear communication, political support and innovative approaches, in order to sustain momentum in the post-2030 period.

35. The Secretariat will host a dedicated web page¹⁷ with a compilation of lessons learned on measurement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and reference materials used in the development of the background document. The task team further informs the Commission that, during 2026–2027, the task team will undertake the second phase of its work as described above and will develop a background document for the fifty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission, in 2027.

C. Work programme of the Expert Group

36. The Expert Group recommends that the following activities be carried out from March 2026 to February 2027:

- (a) Focus on the implementation of the indicator framework, including:
 - (i) Integrating geospatial information and statistics;
 - (ii) Sharing experiences and best practices on monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, including with regard to national Goal platforms, dashboards and portals, the communication of data for the Goals, data disaggregation, inclusive data and data innovations and national efforts towards bridging data gaps for Goal indicators;
 - (iii) Encouraging data innovations, including using non-traditional data sources, such as citizen data, administrative data and private sector data, and data integration;
 - (iv) Reviewing and making recommendations on capacity-building for the Goals in coordination with the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (b) Regularly review methodological developments and issues related to the indicators and their metadata;
- (c) Continue the workstream on data disaggregation to provide further guidance to countries, and liaise with other working groups and existing mechanisms for data disaggregation work, such as the task team on disaggregation of statistics by geographic location of the Working Group on Geospatial Information;
- (d) Continue the work of the working groups on SDMX and geospatial information, and review their workplans to ensure that they are in line with the work programme of the Expert Group;
- (e) Continue the work of the task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (f) Continue dialogues with custodian agencies to improve data collection for global reporting on the Goals;

¹⁷ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/task-team-lessons-learned/>.

(g) Hold semi-annual open meetings, including the seventeenth meeting of the Expert Group, to be held in the fourth quarter of 2026, and continue to interact through regular virtual meetings.

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

37. This section sets out the work carried out by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2025. Section III.A provides an introduction to the Group, including its membership and issue partners. Section III.B is focused on the preparations for the United Nations World Data Forum, while section III.C highlights activities related to financing for data and statistics. Section III.D presents the Group's workplan for 2026.

A. Introduction to the High-level Group

38. The High-level Group is composed of representatives from 22 national statistical offices and operates under the auspices of the Commission. Members of the High-level Group represent their respective regions and are expected to consult regularly within them to reflect regional perspectives in the work of the Group. As stipulated in the Group's terms of reference (E/CN.3/2022/4, annex I), there was a rotation of members in 2025. This process of biennial rotation is managed by the five regional statistical commissions of the United Nations, assisted by the respective Statistics Divisions of those regional commissions. The rotation effective 1 June 2025 resulted in 13 new members joining and nine members continuing to serve another consecutive term. The current co-chairs are the Director General of the Institute of Statistics of Albania, Elsa Dhuli and the Director General of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Macdonald Obudho.

39. The High-level Group invites issue partners, as non-members and observer participants are known, to its open meetings so that they can contribute specific technical advice and share their experiences. Following the rotation, the Group membership made one of its first orders of business to review the list of standing issue partners invited to all open meetings. They decided on a list of 14 organizations and strengthened the terms under which these issue partners contribute to meetings. The Group met four times in 2025, in a mix of in-person and virtual meetings. Further information on the Group, including its current terms of reference, membership, past meeting documents and summaries, the list of standing issue partners and the terms under which they serve is available on the website of the secretariat.¹⁸

B. United Nations World Data Forum

1. Background

40. The United Nations World Data Forum is held every two years. Its aim is to spur data innovation, nurture partnerships, mobilize high-level political and financial support for data and build a pathway to better data for sustainable development. Since the first Forum, in January 2017, the audience for the Forum has grown from 2,000 people to an active stakeholder group of almost 24,000. The sixth Forum will be held

¹⁸ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/>.

in Riyadh, from 9 to 12 November 2026, bringing together data leaders from a diverse range of stakeholders. Over the course of the three-day Forum, there will be opportunities to exchange ideas, showcase innovations, share solutions, discuss future strategies and provide mutual learning opportunities through a wide variety of different events on the programme.

41. The Forum is led by the High-level Group, under the guidance of the Statistical Commission and in close consultation with Member States, international partners and other stakeholders, in accordance with Commission decisions 46/101 and 48/102 (see [E/2015/24](#) and [E/2017/24](#)). The High-level Group receives substantive support from a programme committee for the United Nations World Data Forum and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Members of the programme committee are selected to serve in a personal capacity and are from a cross-section of the data and statistics community. The Statistics Division acts as the secretariat for the programme committee and the High-level Group.

2. Logistics

42. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Forum was organized in a hybrid mode, as a good practice. While the pandemic is no longer an issue with regard to holding the Forum, barriers to participation remain. A recent survey of the community shows that costs are a concern for a substantial number of potential participants. As a result, an optimal balance between the “virtual” and “in-person” experience will be considered by the organizers when organizing the next Forum. Nevertheless, there remain good reasons to focus on the “in-person” experience, since the Forum is a unique venue for experts and other stakeholders from the broader data community to network and interact informally. It also makes the important global, regional and national work showcased during the Forum, as well as the needs for development support, more visible to policy and decision makers. Any decision on specific logistics for the Forum will be communicated in a timely manner to allow all stakeholders to make the necessary preparations to participate.

3. Programme

43. Since 2017, the programme of the Forum has been structured around two types of events: high-level plenary sessions on each thematic area and parallel sessions organized by different partners selected through a call for programme proposals. The number of plenary sessions in the programme peaked at seven during the session held in Bern in 2021 and then fell to four in Medellín, Colombia, in 2024. By contrast, the number of parallel sessions slowly rose from 70 to 80 during early Forums to reach almost 100 in Medellín 2024. These events are bookended by the opening ceremony, held as a single event on the first day, and a short closing ceremony held at the end of the last day.

44. The High-level Group established a new programme committee for the sixth Forum, selecting from candidates who responded to a public call for applications from data and statistics communities, which ran from 19 May to 16 June 2025, and other nominations. The new Committee consists of 28 members with experience spanning government, academia and professional organizations, the private sector, international and regional organizations, the donor and philanthropic sector, the geospatial information community and other parts of the data and statistics community. The Committee has 8 members who have served previously and 20 new members. Ola Awad of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Camilo Mendez of the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia are the Co-Chairs.

The names and biographies of the programme committee members are available on the website of the United Nations World Data Forum.¹⁹

45. The programme committee met four times in 2025 and delivered several important outputs in preparation for the next Forum. It decided to continue the thematic structure adopted in the outcome document of the previous Forum, the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development. This covers four thematic areas: (a) innovation for better and more inclusive data; (b) maximizing the use and value of data for better decision-making; (c) building trust, protection and ethics in data; and (d) effective partnerships for better data and a more equitable data ecosystem. To complement these thematic areas, the Committee will introduce a set of programme tracks into the programme. These tracks are an innovation designed to translate the Forum's themes into action-oriented discussions. While several tracks may be considered, eventually a smaller set will be featured in the programme to maintain focus on the most significant and timely issues. The tracks serve as dynamic pathways to complement the broader, more enduring themes represented by thematic areas.

46. The tracks will be refined and finalized in accordance with the proposals received from the call for programme proposals, which was open from November 2025 to January 2026. The Committee will assess the strength of the proposals received across two rounds of review and will select 70–80 parallel sessions for the programme. The other main deliverable for the programme is the framing and selection of speakers for the four high-level plenary sessions held during the Forum, which will include innovative ways to encourage interaction with the audience.

47. In addition, members of the programme committee will continue the Commit to Data initiative launched in 2024 ahead of the fifth Forum in Medellín. The Commit to Data initiative encourages the data and statistics community mobilized by the Forum to make commitments that strengthen data systems and advance sustainable development worldwide. Open Data Watch and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) have led the initiative on behalf of the programme committee, to collect new commitments and track their progress at the local, regional and global levels in order to sustain action between Forums. At the sixth Forum, in Riyadh, the Commit to Data initiative will support the programme in showing an action-orientated approach by making existing commitments and their achievements visible, collecting new commitments to turn discussions into action and using these commitments to demonstrate concrete action on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan, the Medellín Framework for Action and other anticipated outcomes of the 2026 Forum.

4. Outcome document

48. Each United Nations World Data Forum has resulted in the release of an outcome document to chart the progress of discussions around data and statistics and express the ambitions of the stakeholder community. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data was launched at the first Forum, in 2017, to guide global efforts in statistical and data capacity development, ensuring that countries can generate the full range of data required to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The Action Plan was followed by a series of global commitments that continued to shape the data and statistical agenda. The Dubai Declaration (2018) contained a call for an innovative funding mechanism to support implementation of the Action Plan. This was followed by the Global Data Community's Response to COVID-19 (2020)

¹⁹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/undataforum/partners/programme-committee.html>.

and the Bern Data Compact for the Decade of Action on the Sustainable Development Goals (2021), which articulated how official statistics and national statistical offices should position themselves during the pandemic and within the broader data ecosystem. At the fourth and fifth Forums, held in April 2023 and November 2024, the Hangzhou Declaration: accelerating progress in the implementation of the Cape town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data was launched to reaffirm the global community's commitment to accelerating the implementation of the Action Plan and to provide the foundation for the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, which was introduced at the most recent Forum.

49. The High-level Group, together with issue partners, will develop the next outcome document for the Forum in Riyadh to chart the progress and aspirations of the community. These documents often go through several stages of drafting and review before being put to public consultation shortly before their launch at the Forum.

5. Evaluation

50. The Forum was originally expected to be convened every two years as a four-day event. However, disruptions caused by the pandemic – along with growing interest in the themes of the Forum – resulted in five Forums being held over eight years, as well as a fully virtual edition in 2020. With the Forum now having been held in every United Nations region, the High-level Group considered this an opportune moment to assess whether a formal evaluation could help gauge its effectiveness, impact and opportunities for improvement.

51. Over the past five Forums, evaluation has primarily taken the form of post-event reflections by the High-level Group, which convenes the day after the closing ceremony to review the organization of the Forum and lessons learned. Additional assessment has come from participant and session-organizer feedback forms. These basic methods have contributed to continual improvements in subsequent Forums, for example, broader thematic coverage, more interactive session formats and greater accessibility for a wider and more diverse group of participants, including during the pandemic. As a result, the Forum's potential audience has expanded from thousands to tens of thousands. However, these approaches offer only limited insight into the Forum's broader impact, outcomes and legacy – areas where an external evaluation could add significant value.

52. The High-level Group formulated plans to conduct a more formal and systematic evaluation of the Forum in a background document presented with its report to the fifty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission (March 2025). The background document contained a detailed outline of the evaluation to be completed by May 2025, with evaluation results available in March 2026. However, a lack of resources and budget has prevented the secretariat from progressing with these plans. To address this challenge, the High-level Group has established a subgroup comprising members who are current or previous hosts of the Forum: China, Colombia, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland. This subgroup will take the work forward. The current proposal focuses the evaluation on three streams: outcomes and impact; themes and topics; and participation and engagement. A timetable of outputs is still being developed for delivery in the lead-up to the Forum in November 2026.

6. Next host selection

53. The seventh Forum is expected to be held in the fourth quarter of 2028, which will maintain its intended biennial cycle and is in alignment with the endpoint of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The selection of the next United Nations World Data Forum will be made by the High-Level Group members

by majority vote. The process of selection starts with a letter sent from the Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs to the permanent missions to the United Nations at United Nations Headquarters. This letter is also disseminated through the global contact list of Chief Statisticians and their offices maintained by the Statistics Division. The letter contains a request for Member States to make an informal expression of interest in hosting the Forum, allowing a three-month period to respond. During this period, Member States typically direct requests to the secretariat for further information on what hosting a Forum entails.

54. Once the deadline for expressions of interest has passed, the secretariat reviews the submissions and consults with members of the High-level Group to determine which candidates will be invited to submit full bid documents. Invited candidates receive detailed bidding instructions and the selection criteria used by the High-level Group. After full bid documents are submitted, High-level Group members have an opportunity to request additional information from each candidate. A special meeting is then convened to hear the bids and conduct the vote.

C. Financing for data and statistics

1. Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

55. Data and statistics are cited as a critical public good, but this does not translate into improvements in national, regional and international data and statistical systems. The High-level Group has an important role to play in this area as it is mandated “to recommend priority areas to target funding for statistical capacity-building and advocate for resource mobilization, management and monitoring”. In 2024, an important opportunity arose to advocate for stronger commitments in the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The aim of this global United Nations conference, held every 10 years, is to foster new solutions and international collaboration to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, to boost sustainable investment, address debt challenges and elevate developing countries’ role and make reforms in the international financial architecture.

56. When the Conference was previously convened, in 2015, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda was agreed, highlighting the need for better data and statistics for monitoring and follow-up. However, the case was not clearly made for the value of data and statistics across the entire financing agenda. This view gained more traction recently in the Global Digital Compact, agreed at the United Nations Summit for the Future in September 2024. The Global Digital Compact included a wide set of commitments relevant to the statistical community, such as capacity-building and financing needs.

57. Ahead of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Seville, Spain, from 30 June to 3 July 2025, members of the High-level Group, issue partners and the secretariat worked together from November 2024 to June 2025 to strategize contributions to three areas of the Conference: (a) the outcome document negotiations, (b) the submission of a proposal for the Sevilla Platform for Action and (c) the preparation of side events during the conference. Members and issue partners were successful in working with different negotiation groups to have data and statistics-focused issues throughout the outcome document, the Sevilla Commitment. This is evident in a comparison of the frequency of references to data and statistics between the outcome documents of the Third and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. There is also greater coverage of such references throughout the chapters of the outcome document. Further details of the Fourth

International Conference on Financing for Development are available on the conference website.²⁰

58. To begin the implementation of the Sevilla Commitment on day one, the Sevilla Platform for Action was created to allow coalitions of countries and stakeholders to put forward 130 high-impact initiatives. Six of these initiatives include references to data, and one of them, “FfD4 and the Future of Data: Strengthening Systems for Sustainable Financing”, most closely relates to the work of the High-level Group, as it focuses on strengthening national data and statistical systems. It is co-led by Norway, Colombia and the United Kingdom, and has already been endorsed by more than 20 countries and international partners. The initiative has three pillars: efficient data financing; future-proofing data investment; and political commitment and cross-sector coordination.

59. The first meeting of the FfD4 and the Future of Data initiative was held in September 2025, bringing together participants from almost 50 countries and organizations. The primary objectives were to identify key challenges under the three pillars and to determine areas where each partner can contribute to strengthening national data and statistical systems. Key elements discussed during the first meeting were the needs to strengthen coordination and data-sharing at the national and international levels and to shift the focus from quick data collection solutions towards longer-term investments in strengthening national systems.

60. Endorsement of this Sevilla Platform for Action initiative is still open to countries and organizations interested in contributing to its objectives. Endorsements should come from a high-level official engaged in the finance for development process and can be sent to one of the three co-leads – Norway, Colombia or the United Kingdom. The next phase of the initiative will involve working in smaller groups to develop concrete measures that drive meaningful change. The goal is to present a set of proposals and concrete implemented actions at the Financing for Development Forum 2026. Further details will be provided in a background document.

2. Implementation of the Medellín Framework

61. The Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development was launched at the fifth United Nations World Data Forum on 15 November 2024 in Medellín, Colombia. The Framework was introduced in the context of the United Nations Summit of the Future and its outcome, the Pact for the Future, which included the Global Digital Compact. The Global Digital Compact contains a wide set of commitments relevant to the data and statistical community, including capacity-building and financing needs that the Medellín Framework is aimed at advancing. The Medellín Framework was also promoted as a second-generation document to the original Cape Town Global Action Plan launched at the first Forum, in January 2017. Its structure of 4 areas and 12 underlying priorities provides a useful tool for viewing and organizing the contents of different processes in the data and statistics community. For example, they will form the basis for the development of the next World Data Forum programme, the continuation of the Commit to Data initiative and the implementation of relevant outcomes from the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The High-level Group will continue to explore ways to aid its implementation and measure progress on its priorities.

²⁰ See <https://financing.desa.un.org/ffd4>.

D. Workplan for 2026

62. The High-level Group agreed on a workplan for 2026 see annex II).

IV. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

63. The Commission is invited:

(a) **To take note of the work conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in response to the decisions of the Commission;**

(b) **To express its views and adopt the annual refinements (as contained in annex I to the present report);**

(c) **To express its views and adopt the proposed work programme of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicator for 2026;**

(d) **To take note of the background document of the task team on lessons learned from monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals “Towards post-2030: seeds for future global monitoring frameworks”;**

(e) **To express its views on the preparations for the next United Nations World Data Forum;**

(f) **To endorse the strategy for implementing the Medellín Framework and the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development;**

(g) **To review and approve the proposed workplan of the High-level Group for 2026 as presented in annex II to the present report.**

Annex I

Annual refinements to be made to the global indicator framework^a

Goal and current indicator text (contained in the 2030 Agenda)

Refinement of indicator

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.2.4 Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity, by population group (children aged 6 to 23.9 months and non-pregnant women aged 15 to 49 years)

2.2.4 Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity, by population group (children aged 6 to 23 months and non-pregnant women aged 15 to 49 years)

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income

3.8.2 Proportion of population with positive out-of-pocket household expenditures on health exceeding 40 per cent of household discretionary budget

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts^b

13.2.1 Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

13.2.1 Number of countries with reports under the Paris Agreement, as submitted to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States with reports under the Paris Agreement, as submitted to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

^a Indicator refinements for 2.2.4 and 3.8.2 are corrections from the 2025 comprehensive review of the indicator framework.

^b Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Annex II

Workplan: January–December 2026

1. Preparations for the United Nations World Data Forum to be held in 2026 in Riyadh

- (a) Review of proposals received through the public call for programme proposals (February to May 2026);
- (b) Proposals for high-level plenary speakers, professional moderators and arrangements for the closing session (by February/March 2026);
- (c) Approval of final programme (by June 2026).

Deliverables

- Final programme, including speakers

2. Outcome document

- (a) Drafting process (January to May 2026);
- (b) Public consultation (September 2026);
- (c) Launch (November 2026);

Deliverables

- Outcome document launched on final day of the Forum
- Post-launch implementation strategy

3. Selection of the host country for the seventh United Nations World Data Forum

- (a) Deadline for submission of expressions of interest (March 2026);
- (b) Invitation to submit a detailed bid (with selection criteria and instructions) sent to those selected after submission of an expression of interest (June 2026);
- (c) Deadline for submission of detailed bids (August 2026);
- (d) Presentation of selected bids to High-level Group, vote and decision (September/October 2026).

Deliverables

- Selection of the host country for the seventh Forum

4. Financing for data and statistics

Preparations for the Financing for Development Forum 2026 (April 2026);

Deliverables

- Background document on mapping and application of financing initiatives

5. Meetings

- (a) 41st meeting: 1 March 2026, Statistical Commission, United Nations Headquarters, New York;

- (b) 42nd meeting: June 2026, virtual (to be confirmed);
 - (c) 43rd meeting: September 2026, virtual (to be confirmed);
 - (d) 44th meeting: 9 and 13 November 2026, Riyadh.
-