United Nations E/CN.3/2026/31

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2025

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Fifty-seventh session
New York, 3–6 March 2026
Item 5 (h) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: coordination of statistical programmes

Joint report of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

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 Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, which is submitted to the Commission for information.

25-19747 (E) 221225

Joint report of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

I. Background

1. Coordination among international organizations in the area of official statistics is managed by two closely linked bodies: the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System.

2. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities is co-chaired by Mariana Kotzeva (Eurostat), representing non-United Nations members, and Anu Peltola (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It is supported by three Vice-Chairs, Haishan Fu (World Bank), Steve MacFeely (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Rolando Ocampo (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)). The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System is co-chaired by Anu Peltola and João Pedro Azevedo (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

3. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat serves as secretariat to both Committees. Further information is available at https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite.

4. The Committees work through task teams and online meetings, and hold two formal sessions annually. Since the most recent report to the Statistical Commission, the following sessions were held:

- Forty-sixth session: 1–3 October 2025, hosted by Eurostat in Luxembourg
- Forty-fifth session: 3 March 2025, hosted by the Statistics Division in New York
- Forty-fourth session: 1–3 October 2024, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Montreal, Canada

5. The Committees report to the Statistical Commission on a two-year cycle. In 2024, they submitted their first joint report, reflecting their increasingly integrated work.

II. System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics

6. On 18 June 2020, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2020/5, on strengthening coordination of the statistical programmes in the United Nations system. In response, the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System developed the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics (CEB/2020/1/Add.1), endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in May 2020. The Road Map is designed to support national statistical systems and provide authoritative regional and global data. It is structured around three goals:

- Develop new and timely data solutions
- Address emerging policy needs
- Provide coordinated and innovative support to Member States

7. CEB stressed the need for real-time, interactive United Nations data, access to new sources, including big data, and the application of artificial intelligence, urging rapid implementation of the Road Map. At its fifty-second session, the Statistical Commission, in its decision 52/104, welcomed the Road Map as a solid commitment to modernizing United Nations statistics and strengthening coordination. It also supported partnerships with the United Nations Geospatial Network and the Development Coordination Office of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, in particular for the new UNdata portal.

8. The UNdata initiative is aimed at improving visibility and access to authoritative statistical data and metadata, enhancing discovery and interoperability. It currently includes data from the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF, and is integrating additional data from pilot agencies: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ECLAC, UN Comtrade Database, Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Advanced tools are being developed to simplify the provision of data to the UNdata portal.

9. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System monitors implementation of the Road Map and, in October 2025, decided to conduct a final review to prepare a report for the High-Level Committee on Programmes and CEB. In 2026, the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System will update the Road Map to address new challenges and opportunities, presenting an updated Road Map and related strategy to the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

III. Work on emerging topics in official statistics

A. Data governance

10. At the request of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System led the working group on new global public goods and international data governance. In November 2024, CEB endorsed the "Proposed normative foundations for international data governance: goals and principles",[1] building on the vision for international data governance outlined in earlier work.[2] The note sets out 12 principles under three goals:

- Value: enabling environment for data use and reuse; interoperability; mutuality; and solidarity
- Trust: human rights-based approach to data; accountability; data quality; and data security and infrastructure protection
- Equity: digital self-determination; fairness and non-discrimination; people-centred approach; and data stewardship

11. In 2024, the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System was asked for expert input during negotiations on the Global Digital Compact, adopted in September 2024 as part of the Pact for the Future. In its paragraph 48, the Compact mandated the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to establish a working group to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue on data governance at all levels to address principles, interoperability, benefit-sharing and secure cross-border data flows. The Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels first met in May 2025, with participation from several members of the

[1] https://unsceb.org/proposed-normative-foundations-international-data-governance-goals-and-principles.

[2] CEB/2023/1/Add.2.

Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, with the aim of reporting to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session. On 31 October 2025, the Committee held a special session, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) coordinated joint input reflecting the statistical community's work and priorities in data governance, such as consistency with official statistics principles, human rights standards, interoperability and open data standards. The note linked to the Statistical Commission's Working Group on Data Governance, which is developing a glossary of data governance terms for joint finalization. FAO presented the input of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities at the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels in November 2025.

B. Beyond gross domestic product

12. In May 2025, the Secretary-General launched the independent high-level expert group on beyond GDP[3] to develop recommendations for a limited number of country-owned and universally applicable indicators of sustainable development that complement gross domestic product (GDP). Member States asked that this work build on the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework and be carried out in close consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, taking into consideration the work of the Statistical Commission.

13. The initiative followed a United Nations system-wide report[4] and the Secretary-General's policy brief on *Valuing What Counts*.[5] The Statistics, Data and Digital Service of UNCTAD, the Statistics Division, UNDP and the Executive Office of the Secretary General serve as co-secretariat. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System closely follow the process. In November 2025, the interim report[6] was shared for feedback from national statistical offices and members of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

14. The topic has been discussed in multiple forums, including human rights events, preparatory round tables for the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the sixteenth quadrennial session of UNCTAD. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities supports the high-level seminar of the Statistical Commission on "Beyond GDP: rethinking progress in a changing world", scheduled for 3 March 2026, to foster dialogue between statisticians and the high-level expert group co-chairs.

C. Artificial intelligence-readiness for official statistics

15. On 2 and 3 October 2024, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities held a special session on artificial intelligence and official statistics. Subsequently, in October 2025, the Committee endorsed the document entitled "AI-readiness and (re)distribution of official statistics: opportunities, challenges and recommendations", prepared by the World Bank with input from Committee members. The document, based on a room paper[7] for the fifty-sixth session of the

[3] www.un.org/en/beyondGDP.
[4] https://unsceb.org/topics/beyond-gdp.
[5] www.un-ilibrary.org/content/papers/10.18356/27082245-27.
[6] www.un.org/en/beyondGDP/consultations.
[7] https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_56/documents/Room_Document-WorldBank-E.pdf.

Statistical Commission, is being submitted to the Commission at its fifty-seventh session as a background document to the present report.

16. The background document on artificial intelligence readiness contains an analysis of the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance the dissemination of official statistics. The document also addresses the challenges and risks associated with third-party redistribution of official data, in particular when artificial intelligence-enabled search engines and leading chatbots may present information that is outdated, lacks context or is inaccurate. Recommendations are provided for three key stakeholder groups:

(a) Official data producers are encouraged to reinforce rigorous quality control, improve and standardize metadata, and update mechanisms for sharing data and metadata, such as through application programming interfaces and interoperable protocols;

(b) International organizations should facilitate collaboration between artificial intelligence developers and data producers, advance the adoption of common standards and support efforts to improve artificial intelligence readiness among data producers in low- and middle-income countries;

(c) Third-party redistributors, especially major technology companies, are advised to collaborate closely with the official statistics community, prioritize authoritative sources and proper attribution, and adhere to best practices established by the statistics community.

17. An accompanying paper entitled “Redistribution of official statistics published under open data licenses: permissions, obligations, and recommendations” has been prepared by FAO, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Bank, with contributions from the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities. That paper addresses recurrent challenges associated with the redistribution of official statistics by third parties – such as specialized platforms, search engines and artificial intelligence chatbots – in particular when international best practices for statistical dissemination are not observed. These practices include clarity of presentation, proper attribution to authoritative sources, preservation of interpretability via comprehensive metadata, transparency regarding data transformation, timeliness and consistency. The document offers a practical analysis of open-data licence terms, elucidating the implications of the permissions and obligations formulated in such licences. The document delineates the expectations of the official statistics community for responsible redistribution of official statistics, with the aim of ensuring that official figures remain accurate, traceable and interpretable. It also provides recommendations for both licensors and licensees to enhance practices.

18. These issues will be discussed at the high-level seminar of the Statistical Commission, to be held during its fifty-seventh session, on artificial intelligence readiness for official data and statistics, organized by the Statistics Division and the Bureau of the Commission.

IV. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Liaison with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

19. To address the Sustainable Development Goal data gaps, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities worked closely with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators during the 2025

comprehensive review. Several members attended the Group's October 2023 meeting, and the Committee held a special session on 15 March 2024 to identify low-coverage indicators and plan improvements, including through data innovation. The Group joined the Committee's October 2024 meeting to discuss the process and ensure that consideration is given to investments already made in the development of Goal indicators by countries and internationally.

20. On 11 November 2025, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities held a special session with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators task team on lessons learned. FAO and OECD prepared a note summarizing successes such as inclusive approaches, tier classification and flexibility through periodic reviews, which enabled innovation and strengthened coordination. Challenges included gaps in communication, inconsistent tiering, unclear custodian roles, fragmented coordination and resource constraints. Recommendations included:

- Clear governance and transparent criteria for indicator selection and tiering
- Early involvement of statistical experts
- Formalized custodian roles and adequate resources
- Integration of Sustainable Development Goal reporting into national cycles
- Multi-stakeholder platforms to avoid duplication
- Prioritization of a minimum set of universal indicators with flexibility for national priorities
- Investment in data governance, interoperability and human rights safeguards

21. Feedback from the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities will inform the task team's submission under item 3 (k) to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-seventh session.

B. Use of population data for global monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals

22. Recognizing the importance of household numbers for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities formed a task team in October 2023 to review data collection efforts and explore methodologies for producing comparable household data. Stocktaking revealed that no organization currently collects harmonized data. Applying the household definition from *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*, proved challenging due to cultural diversity, evolving household structures, migration and urbanization.

23. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities task team submitted a background paper[8] to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-sixth session, which was referenced in the report of the Secretary-General on the 2020 and 2030 World Population and Housing Census Programmes.[9] The Commission recognized the importance of calculating internationally comparable time series data on the total number of households.

[8] https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_56/documents/BG-3b-Estimation_Total_Number_Households-E.pdf.

[9] E/CN.3/2025/3.

C. Enhancing the system of social and demographic statistics

24. In October 2024, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities engaged with the Friends of the Chair group on social and demographic statistics, established by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-third session, to recommend an agile system reflecting links between society, environment and economy, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, while anticipating data needs beyond. The Committee discussed the required collaboration across agencies for systemic measurement and agreed to engage in the effort. The Friends of the Chair group will present its central framework for a system of population and social statistics to the Commission under item 3 (b).

D. Consistent use of classifications for reporting on the Goals

25. To ensure consistency in reporting, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities discussed common approaches to geographical classifications, including naming conventions and coverage. At the request of the Committee, in December 2024 FAO surveyed the practices of agencies on applying the Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use. Findings were reviewed by the Committee, which supported further work for greater alignment.

V. Policy uptake and visibility of official statistics

26. United Nations conferences increasingly recognize robust, inclusive and interoperable data systems as essential for sustainable development, digital transformation and social equity. Data are now seen as not only a monitoring tool but also a strategic enabler for governance, financing and innovation. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System actively contributed to these processes, and Member States consulted the Co-Chairs during negotiations.

27. The Pact for the Future,[10] adopted in September 2024, includes calls for metrics beyond GDP and a commitment to strengthening digital cooperation and data governance. Annex I thereto, the Global Digital Compact, references data and statistics over 90 times. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities participated in events at the Summit of the Future, including sessions on beyond GDP and digital transformation. The Compact warns that underinvestment in public data systems can hamper progress and commits Member States to increase financing for data and statistics by 2030, build capacity and ensure responsible data use, especially in developing countries. It sets an ambitious goal of a 50 per cent increase in Sustainable Development Goal monitoring data, requiring significant support for countries. The Compact also calls for enhanced cooperation on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, linking data governance to human rights and security, and it mandated the creation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels.

28. On 1 July 2025, at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Seville, Spain, the Co-Chair of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System spoke at a side event on “Investing in data, advancing development”, organized by Colombia, Norway, Zambia, UNCTAD, UNODC, UNDP and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. The Conference featured more than 10 data-focused events, and its outcome,[11] the

[10] General Assembly resolution 79/1.

[11] General Assembly resolution 79/323, annex.

Sevilla Commitment, includes commitments to investing in data systems to strengthen resource mobilization, manage debt and improve transparency. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities also supported the launch of the Sevilla Platform for Action initiative on "The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the future of data: strengthening systems for sustainable financing", led by Colombia, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, calling for coordinated, future-proof investments in national data ecosystems.

29. On 10 July 2025, at the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities organized a session entitled "Data first in the artificial intelligence era: the case for data governance".[12] Speakers stressed that poor data governance was a security and development risk and called for effective data governance, grounded in human rights, as the foundation for responsible artificial intelligence use. Overall, the Summit considered data and statistics as the backbone of inclusive digital development.

30. In September 2025, the World Telecommunication and ICT Indicators Symposium[13] discussed financing for digital development statistics, emphasizing national ownership and integration into budgets for sustainability, with participation by the Co-Chair of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System.

31. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System prepared a session for the World Social Summit, led by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on 4 November 2025 on "Ensuring that no one is left behind: the role of disaggregated data". The session highlighted the key role of statistics in looking deeper into the lives, challenges and realities of vulnerable groups. In the Doha Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development", Heads of State and Government and high representatives reaffirmed commitments to strengthen national statistical systems with disaggregated data, especially in developing countries and advance metrics beyond GDP.[14] Related events included the launch of the interim report by the Secretary-General's high-level expert group on beyond GDP with a youth dialogue emphasizing human rights and well-being and a session on financing social development using beyond GDP metrics, organized by OECD and UNCTAD.

VI. Other areas of coordination

A. World Statistics Day

32. The fourth World Statistics Day, on 20 October 2025, was celebrated under the theme "Driving change with quality statistics and data for everyone". The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities joined the celebrations with a joint press release[15] and by participating in a 24-hour webinar marathon, led by the Statistics Division and the statistical divisions of the regional commissions. The marathon included live sessions from each regional commission and the Statistics Division, showcasing innovations in official statistics, sharing new methodologies and

[12] See www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Files/View/DOC/5f8cc0571166f01188b8005056a84dbd/outcomedocument_session_498_unctad.pdf.

[13] See www.itu.int/itu-d/meetings/wtis25/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2025/10/WTIS-25_SummaryReport.pdf.

[14] General Assembly resolution 80/5, annex, para. 43 (i).

[15] www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/intlcoop/CCSA_PressRelease_WorldStatisticsDay2025.pdf.

technologies and showcasing partnerships to make data more accessible and impactful. The World Statistics Day events highlighted the need for investment in statistical capacity and digital literacy to ensure that data benefit all and support progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

B. Coordination with United Nations system mechanisms

33. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System reports to CEB, which is chaired by the Secretary-General, through its subsidiary bodies: the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management. Regular progress reports on the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics are provided to the High-Level Committee on Programmes. The Committee will prepare an updated Road Map in 2026, as requested by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-second session, to address shared challenges.

34. The High-Level Committee on Management focuses on efficiency and internal processes, recently prioritizing data governance and calling for consistent inter-agency standards to safeguard sensitive information and ensure data protection in artificial intelligence applications. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System, tasked by the High-Level Committee, coordinated work on United Nations data typologies to reduce fragmentation across the system.

35. Data are increasingly treated as a strategic asset in the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere.[16] The Joint Inspection Unit launched a review of United Nations data governance, and the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System will facilitate coordination among entities during this process.

36. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System strengthened collaboration with the Development Coordination Office, which oversees the resident coordinator network and serves as secretariat to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, to jointly support national statistical systems and enhance Sustainable Development Goal data. The Office participates in the Committee as an observer.

37. In October 2025, the meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities discussed collaboration with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, which is developing the One United Nations Geospatial Situation Room[17] to integrate maps, applications and geospatial knowledge.

VII. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

38. The Commission is invited:

(a) To take into account the views expressed in the present report by both Committees in its discussions under the relevant agenda items;

(b) To take note of the present report.

[16] www.un.org/en/content/datastrategy.

[17] https://onemap.un.org.