Asian Thematic Conference:

Managing a statistical organization in times of change

Draft programme note and agenda

12 – 14 February 2020

Manila, Philippines

Draft Programme Note

- The Thematic Conferences is being held on 12-14 February 2020 in Manila, Philippines.
- The Conference is targeted at heads and/or senior managers of national statistical agencies.
- The participation of 2 delegates from each of the following ESCAP member states is expected: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, China Hong Kong SAR, China Macau SAR, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Viet Nam.
- Multilateral and bilateral donors active in the region are welcome to participate and contribute.

Purpose and background

The Asia Thematic Conference (12-14 February, Manila, Philippines) is part of a series of regional conferences organised to further understand and prioritise the emerging needs of statistical organisations to adapt and develop, as stressed in the **Cape Town Global Action Plan**[1] (CTGAP) for Sustainable Development, the final report of the series of conferences on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics,[2] the regional Collective Vision and Framework for Action[3] and regional Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind.[4]

In particular, the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related regional and national development policies requires national statistical systems to grasp the potential of innovative technologies in a rapidly changing data ecosystem while reinforcing leadership, coordination, communication and dialogue through institutional and organizational reforms, in compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2014. Modernization, transformation and adaptation are crucial if official statistics are to meet the widening and increasing requirements of policymakers, researchers, the media and civil society for high-quality, timely and disaggregated statistics.

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[1] See https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/cape-town-global-action-plan/, and E/CN.3/2017/3 and E/CN.3/2018/4.
[2] See E/CN.3/2017/5.
[3] See E.ESCAP/CST(5)/1 at
https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E.ESCAP_.CST%285%29.1.Rev_.1.Collective_Vision.English.pdf
[4] See E.ESCAP/CST/2018/7 https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/ESCAP_CST_2018_7_Declaration.pdf

Supporting this process of adaptation and modernization, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its 49th session endorsed the proposed outline of the updated **Handbook of Statistical Organization**[5] (the Handbook) aimed at guiding chief statisticians and senior managers of statistical organizations in developing and maintaining statistical capacity that is fit for purpose. An advisory group[6] was established with the task of providing overall guidance to the drafting team at UNSD and of ensuring a link with the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) and other relevant bodies. The UNSC suggested this approach being complemented with this series of thematic conferences at the regional and sub-regional level, at which senior statisticians may address recent institutional, organizational and technical developments addressing prospective challenges and opportunities for the production of official statistics and indicators.

Objective of the Asian Thematic Conference and target audience

The main objective of this Thematic Conference is to better understand and prioritise the emerging needs of statistical organisations in Asia to adapt and develop and exchange experiences and strategies of Member States in such processes. The regional approach will put emphasis on aspects of this process that are typical for Asia and represent common challenges among members of the region. The workshop will also stimulate an exchange of information on national best practices as well as recent global and regional initiatives and programmes supporting the necessary transformation and modernisation of official statistics to address emerging user needs for high-quality and internationally comparable statistics and indicators.

The Conference will allow the organizers to collect additional information on practices and challenges that will contribute to an extended knowledge base related to the new Handbook whose purpose is to guide chief statisticians and senior managers in developing, adapting and maintaining statistical organisations that are fit for purpose. The Handbook itself will be based on the strategic development areas mentioned in the CTGAP and the outcome of the series of regional conferences on a transformative agenda for official statistics.

Structure of the Thematic Conference

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[5] See E/CN.3/2018/5.
[6] Members of the Advisory Group are Brazil, Kenya, Mongolia, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Suriname, United Kingdom, FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, Asian Development Bank, Eurostat, Open Data Watch, PARIS21, SESRIC, and the five UN Regional Commissions.

The organizing committee[7] of the Asian Thematic Conference suggested to structure the two and a half (2 ½) day event around 4 main sessions covering the 6 strategic areas of the CTGAP and the 14 substantive chapters of the forthcoming Handbook identified as highly relevant for Asia. The organizing committee also proposed to allocate enough time for discussions and interventions after each session and to organize 2 series of breakout sessions after session 2 and session 4. An initial outline of the draft agenda is attached to this document.

Session 1: Supporting the transformation of statistical production processes from the data collection to dissemination in the context of the digital and technological revolution

This session will address the transformation and modernisation of the production architecture, processes and related technology, including the integration of innovative data sources for the compilation of official statistics and indicators. The session will also cover the development of innovative strategies and integrated platforms for data sharing and dissemination.

Available chapters for discussion	
VIII	Data sources, collection and processing
X	Dissemination and user communications
XIV	Information technology management
XIII	_Data, information and knowledge management_
XI	_Common statistical infrastructure_

Session 2: Strengthening the institutional and organisational frameworks of national statistical systems

This session will address how to strengthen the institutional and organisational frameworks of national statistical systems. Interventions and discussions will also cover the role of national statistical offices as leaders and coordinators of these systems, as well as their partnerships with non-traditional data providers and the data community at large.

Available chapters for discussion	
IV	National statistical system
III	Basis of official statistics
V	National statistical office

Session 3: Securing quality of statistical information and improving data coherence through statistical analysis and analytical frameworks

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[7] For the Asian Thematic Conference, the members of the organizing committee are Mongolia, Philippines, Asian Development Bank, UN-ESCAP and UNSD.

This session will address the relevance and use of national quality assurance frameworks that secure the production of official statistics and indicators meeting the needs of the various user groups, and how to interact with them in order to identify their needs and priorities. The session will also consider how analysis and analytical frameworks, such as national accounts and other domain-specific accounting frameworks, can address data inconsistencies and eventually improve the coherence of official statistics and indicators across various domains.

Available chapters for discussion	
VII	Quality management
IX	Analysis and analytical frameworks
VI	*Users and their needs*

Session 4: *Mobilizing and securing adequate resources and infrastructure, and promoting regional and global cooperation for the development of national statistical capacity*

This session will discuss how to ensure effective means of mobilizing and securing adequate national resources, including human resources, and infrastructure, as well as how to promote and coordinating efforts at regional and global levels to support the implementation of country-owned strategies and programmes for the development of official statistics and indicators.

Available chapters for discussion	
XII	Human resources management and development
XV	Management of finance, buildings and physical space
XVI	*International activities and collaboration*

Breakout sessions:

The 2 breakout sessions will serve as an overview of the themes of the workshop and will broadly cover all themes presented and discussed respectively in sessions 1 and 2 for the first breakout session and sessions 3 and 4 for the second one. Participants will be split into 3-4 groups and will discuss a set of prepared questions. The objective of the breakout sessions is to identify and further discuss good practices, opportunities, lessons learned and challenges in Managing a statistical organization in times of change. Participants will also be invited to propose ways to embrace opportunities and address challenges including through specific programmes and actions supported by multilateral and bilateral donors. For each group, a designated speaker will deliver a short report in plenary on the main outcome of the discussions that will be commented by a small panel and eventually further discussed with all participants. It is expected that the reports and discussions in plenary will lead to the

conclusions of the workshop including next steps/way forward and eventually proposals for future capacity building activities.

The outcome of the breakout sessions, allowing for the consolidation of knowledge and experiences shared, will significantly contribute to inform the upcoming Handbook.

Draft Agenda

Wednesday, 12ᵗʰ February

Registration (08:30 - 09:00)

Welcome and opening (09:00 - 09:45)

Chair: UNSD

- United Nations Statistics Division
- UNESCAP
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Tea/coffee break and group photo (09:45 – 10:15)

Introduction (10:15 - 10:45)

- UNSD (15')
  Introduction to the work on the 4th edition of the Handbook on Statistical Organisation and priority themes for the conference

General discussion (15')

Session 1:	Supporting the transformation of statistical production processes from the data collection to dissemination in the context of the digital and technological revolution
10:45-12:30	

Chair: Mr. Kemueli Naiqama, Fiji

Presentations:

- UNSD (15')
  Statistical production infrastructure, data sources, information technology, dissemination and user support

- ADB (15')
  Strengthening capacity to respond to statistical challenges in the Information Technology Age: Asia's experience

- Malaysia (15')
  The Transformation and Modernisation of Official Statistics in Malaysia

- Mongolia (15')
  Data dissemination and the register-based census

- India (15')
  Strengthening and Modernisation of India's National Statistical System

General discussion (30')

Lunch break (12:30-13:30)

Session 2: **Strengthening the institutional and organisational frameworks of national**
13:30-15:30 **statistical systems**

Chair: Ms. Rosalinda Bautista, Philippines

Presentations:

- UNSD (15')
  Sound Institutional and Organizational Frameworks for Official Statistics

- UNESCAP (15')
  Navigating policy with data to leave no one behind

- Indonesia (15')
  Nourishing the National Statistical Systems towards One Data Indonesia, Indonesia experience

- Sri Lanka (15')
  Overview of the Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka

- Myanmar (15')
  Strengthening National Statistical System in Myanmar

- Maldives (15')
  National Statistical System of Maldives

General discussion (45')

Tea/coffee break (15:30-16:00)

Breakout 1: **Group discussion for sessions 1 and 2**
16:00-17:15 (see document on conference modalities for questions and group compositions)

Group 1A & B	Set of suggested topics related to session 1 prepared in advance
Group 2A & B	Set of suggested topics related to session 2 prepared in advance

Thursday, 13th February

Breakout 1: **Report in plenary and general discussion**	
09:00-10:30	

Facilitator: UNSD

Report back on outcome of breakout session (10' each group)

Reporters for General Discussion:

- Rapporteur group 1A

- Rapporteur group 1B

- Rapporteur group 2A

- Rapporteur group 2B

Tea/coffee break (10:30-11:00)

Session 3:	**Securing quality of statistical information and improving data coherence**
11:00-13:00	**through statistical analysis and analytical frameworks**

Chair: Ms. Wanpeng Poonwong, Thailand

Presentations:

- UNSD (15')
  User needs, quality management and analytical requirements

- Bangladesh (15')
  NSO and its activities in Bangladesh

- Lao PDR (15')
  Quality Management on Official Statistics in Lao PDR

- Iran (15')
  Importance of Modernization of the National Statistical System and Plans and Initiatives of the SCI for Modernization of the National Statistical System in Iran and Establishing Iran's Statistical Registers System (IRANSTARS)

- Cambodia (15')
  Users and their needs – Cambodia's exerience

General discussion (45')

Lunch break (13:00-14:00)

Session 4: 14:00-16:00	Mobilizing and securing adequate resources and infrastructure, and promoting regional and global cooperation for the development of national statistical capacity

Chair: Ms. K.M.D.S.D. Karunaratne, Sri Lanka

Presentations:

- UNSD (15')
  Securing and Developing Statistical Capacity, Specific programmes and tools in the SDG era

- UNESCAP (15')
  Regional initiatives and experiences

- Nepal (15')
  International Cooperation in Statistical Capacity Development – A case of Nepalese Experience

- Bhutan (15')
  Mobilizing Resources for the Development of Statistical Capacity

- Viet Nam (15')
  National statistical capacity development of Vietnam

General discussion (45')

Friday, 14th February

Breakout 2: **Group discussion for sessions 3 and 4**

09:00-10:30 (see document on conference modalities for questions and group compositions)

Group 3A & B	Set of suggested topics related to session 3 prepared in advance
Group 4A & B	Set of suggested topics related to session 4 prepared in advance

Tea/coffee break (10:30-11:15)

Breakout 2:

11:15-12:45 **Report in plenary and general discussion**

Facilitator: UNSD

Report back on outcome of breakout session (10' each group)

Reporters for General Discussion:

- Rapporteur group 3A

- Rapporteur group 3B

- Rapporteur group 4A

- Rapporteur group 4B

Closing – Conclusions of the Conference (12:45 – 13:15)

- Final discussion (15')

- Co-organisers (UNSD/ ADB) final conclusions (15')