

## Annex I

### **Terms of reference for the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

(Amended version of 31 October 2024)

#### **I. Role**

1. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as part of its strategic leadership in the organization of the United Nations World Data Forum, is the custodian of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for sustainable development data and its follow-up outcome documents resulting from successive Forums.

2. Through these activities, the High-level Group connects data and statistics for sustainable development, relating to the framework of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, with other parts of government and relevant external stakeholders, such as civil society (non-governmental organizations), the private sector, academia and professional associations, international and regional agencies, donor and philanthropic foundations, national geospatial information authorities and the media.

#### **II. Objectives**

3. The objectives of the High-level Group are:

(a) To promote national ownership of, and foster capacity-building, partnership and coordination for, the follow-up and review system of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including to ensure consistency between national, regional and global data and statistics;

(b) To recommend priority areas to target funding for statistical capacity-building and advocate for resource mobilization, management and monitoring;

(c) To review and make recommendations as appropriate and in cooperation with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to facilitate the modernization and harmonization of data infrastructures and identify ways to leverage the resources and creativity of the private sector;

(d) To promote engagement between the official statistics community and all other stakeholders working on the implementation and monitoring of globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

#### **III. Membership**

4. The High-level Group will comprise 22 member representatives of national statistical offices. Members will be nominated through existing regional mechanisms<sup>1</sup> for an initial term of two years. A rotation of the members will take place every two years on the basis of the following criteria: two members will be replaced from each region where there are four or five members, and one will be replaced where there are three members or fewer.<sup>2</sup> It is preferable that members of the High-level Group not

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Commission for Africa, Conference of European Statisticians, Statistical Conference of the Americas, Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

<sup>2</sup> Currently, there are five members from Africa, two from Western Asia, four from Asia, one from the Pacific, two from the Caribbean, three from Latin America, one from Eastern Europe and four from Europe and North America.

serve concurrently as members of its sibling group, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The members of the High-level Group will elect two Co-Chairs. One or both Co-Chairs are also expected to rotate every two years. However, when they step down, they are invited to serve for an additional term of two years as members.

5. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will act as the secretariat.

#### **IV. Organization and conduct of the work**

6. The High-level Group will work in close consultation with its sibling group, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, through its Co-Chairs and the Chair of the Statistical Commission, who are invited to its meetings. The High-level Group will also seek inputs from non-member countries through their respective regional mechanisms.

7. To engage the wider data ecosystem in its work, the High-level Group will invite issue partners, as regular non-member and observer participants are known, with expertise in a specific area of interest to contribute their technical advice and share their experiences. The criteria for their invitation will depend on the strategic priorities established by the High-level Group and on to the nature of the topics for discussion at each meeting or stage of a workstream. A standing list of issue partners will be maintained as the invitation list to the group's meetings.

8. The group will meet four times per year with the following conventions, with exceptions made according to the preferences of members and needs of the agenda:

(a) All regular meetings will be open by default for issue partners to attend and for other non-members by invitation only;

(b) In-person/hybrid meeting will be held prior to the session of the Statistical Commission each year and on the first day and day after the United Nations World Data Forum, in years when it takes place. Other meetings will normally be held virtually;

(c) Special meetings may be convened to discuss specific issues and usually in a closed session.

9. The strategic nature of the group requires the leadership level for each member country to be at the Chief Statistician (or equivalent) of the national statistical office (NSO), with the following conditions:

(a) The Chief Statistician can designate other high-level colleagues having appropriate capacities from the NSO to attend meetings on their behalf in the event of a temporary absence or on a permanent basis, as appropriate. However, strategic decisions defined in advance in the meeting agenda will require the physical or written representation of the Chief Statistician.

(b) Regular attendance at meetings is required; non-participation by a member country in two consecutive meetings will incur a notice by the secretariat to their regional mechanism and, if non-participation continues into a third meeting, then the secretariat will request an out-of-cycle rotation of that member through their regional mechanism.

#### **V. Expected duration**

10. The High-level Group will operate under the auspices of the Statistical Commission and will report to it annually, seeking its guidance.

11. The mandate and functioning of the High-level Group will be reviewed by the Statistical Commission as needed.

**VI. Annual work plan**

12. In line with the mandate and further guidance given by the Commission, the High-level Group will plan its activities and deliverables according to an annual work plan presented for approval each year to the Commission.