



# Economic and Social Council

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## Statistical Commission

### Forty-fifth session

4-7 March 2014

Item 3 (m) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for discussion and decision: World Statistics Day**

## World Statistics Day

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report has been prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2013/235. Based on a global consultation process, it contains a proposal to organize World Statistics Day on 20 October 2015 under the proposed theme “Statistics for better decision-making — statistics for better development”. The Statistical Commission is invited to endorse the observance of 20 October 2015 as World Statistics Day under the theme suggested above. Further points for discussion are contained in paragraph 9 of the report.

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\* E/CN.3/2014/1.



## **I. Background**

1. At its forty-first session, the Statistical Commission, in its decision 41/109, endorsed 20 October 2010 as the date for the first World Statistics Day, as well as the theme “Celebrating the many achievements of official statistics”, along with the core values of service, integrity and professionalism. Following the celebration of the first World Statistics Day, the Commission, at its forty-second session, in its decision 42/101, expressed satisfaction and appreciation that the observance of World Statistics Day had been a global success and had made a positive impact in advocating the importance of official statistics. As a result of the success of this first celebration of World Statistics Day in 2010, the Commission, at its forty-third session, in March 2012, confirmed the recommendation of its Bureau that World Statistics Day be celebrated every five years, with the next celebration occurring in 2015.

## **II. Proposal for the celebration of World Statistics Day in 2015**

2. In preparation for World Statistics Day 2015, the Statistics Division sent out a letter dated 12 November 2013 soliciting the input of Member States with regard to the date of the celebration, as well as suggestions regarding the theme for the Day. The Division received 41 responses, with many suggestions regarding the date of the celebration and proposals for the overarching theme.

### **A. Date of the celebration**

3. Of the 52 responses received as a result of the global consultation on World Statistics Day 2015, more than half suggested keeping the same date as in 2010, namely, 20 October. The main reason given was that this would allow for consistency and 20 October could then be declared World Statistics Day every five years. In addition, several other dates, 15 February, 15 May and 15 October 2015, were all suggested multiple times in the responses received for the reason that they would provide an interesting numerical sequence, much as 20 October 2010 had. Although a number of other dates were also mentioned by the countries that responded, none of them received multiple nominations.

### **B. Proposed themes**

4. During the consultation process, the Statistics Division received many interesting ideas regarding the theme for this day. These themes can be grouped into four main categories. The most popular suggested theme for World Statistics Day 2015, with 14 mentions out of the 52 responses, was “Official statistics for better decision-making and better development”. As 2015 is the year in which reporting on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will occur, many countries suggested that tying these two events together in some way would be beneficial and would allow the general public to see how statistics are used to make and influence government policy. The following three suggestions each received either four or five mentions in the responses received: “Trust in official statistics”, “Challenges for statistics in the information society” and “Statistical literacy”. In addition, the

following five ideas each received two mentions: “Statistics and migration”, “How statistics are created”, “Using statistics to mitigate the effects of climate change”, “National accomplishments of the Millennium Development Goals” and “Social statistics: using census results to obtain statistical information”. Finally, “Big data/the data revolution”, “Youth statistics”, “International cooperation and worldwide statistical capacity-building” and “A world with statistics is a better world” were each mentioned once. It should also be noted that 11 countries did not make a specific recommendation for a theme in their response.

5. While only one overarching theme should be chosen for the worldwide celebration of World Statistics Day, it is important to mention that the celebration will continue to be decentralized in nature. This means that each country will be able to design a celebration and create materials that fit best within their own national reality and will try to relate those ideas to the main theme for World Statistics Day and the materials that will be created and provided by the Statistics Division.

### **III. Methods of celebration**

6. As previously requested by the Commission and indicated above, the 2015 celebration of World Statistics Day will be decentralized in nature like the first celebration, in 2010, with materials developed by the Statistics Division and disseminated to countries. The Division will create a website for the celebration and such materials as posters, pamphlets and handouts, in addition to providing assistance where possible in terms of publicity, the organization of seminars and workshops and participation in special events.

### **IV. Process for the endorsement of World Statistics Day 2015 by the General Assembly**

7. In 2011, the Commission stressed that the mandate provided by the General Assembly in its resolution [64/267](#), in which it designated 20 October 2010 as the first World Statistics Day, was a crucial basis for bringing the issue of official statistics to the attention of policy decision makers at the highest levels. The Commission, therefore, suggested that the mandate of the Assembly again be sought for future World Statistics Days. Specifically, in order to leave sufficient time for preparatory activities, it was suggested that the mandate of the Assembly for World Statistics Day 2015, as well as for future World Statistics Days at the proposed five-year intervals, be sought by 2014 at the latest.

8. In this context, the Secretariat informed the Statistics Division that draft resolutions establishing special days or years could be suggested only by Member States, not subsidiary bodies or other United Nations organs. Thus, in procedural terms, the Commission is not in a position to recommend to the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly a draft resolution establishing the second World Statistics Day. It is therefore suggested that the Chair of the Commission, supported by the Bureau as well as Commission members and observers, sponsor such a draft resolution in the Assembly. A possible draft resolution is annexed to the present report.

## **V. Points for discussion**

9. **The Commission may wish to:**
  - (a) **To designate 20 October 2015 as the second World Statistics Day;**
  - (b) **To comment on the proposed theme “Statistics for better decision-making — statistics for better development”;**
  - (c) **To request the Statistics Division to provide appropriate guidance and coordination to countries in the observance of World Statistics Day and to provide publicity for the events being organized;**
  - (d) **To comment on the draft resolution contained in the annex to the present report.**

## Annex

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution [64/267](#) of 3 June 2010,

*Recalling also* the report of the Secretary-General to the Statistical Commission at its forty-fifth session, as well as the Commission's decision \_\_\_\_, in which it endorsed the proposal to celebrate 20 October 2015 as World Statistics Day,

*Recognizing* the long history of official statistics and the facilitating role played by the United Nations since the creation in 1947 of the Statistical Commission, which was tasked with promoting the development of national statistics and improving their comparability, coordinating the statistical work of specialized agencies, developing central statistical services of the Secretariat, advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information and promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally,

*Acknowledging* the fundamental importance of sustainable national statistical capacity to produce reliable and timely statistics and indicators measuring a country's progress, which are an indispensable basis for informed policy decision-making and for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and any future global development agenda at the national, regional and international levels,

*Recalling* Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 of 24 July 2006, entitled "Strengthening statistical capacity", in which the Council called upon Member States, the United Nations system, international agencies, donor countries and organizations to support national efforts in building and strengthening national statistical capacity, in particular of developing countries,

*Recalling also* the endorsement of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by the General Assembly on \_\_\_\_ as a recent milestone in the codification and promotion of basic values in official statistics,

*Noting* that many Member States and some regions already celebrate official statistics through a variety of national and regional initiatives, such as designated months, weeks, days or events, and welcoming their support and willingness to coordinate such events under the auspices of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to designate 20 October 2015 as World Statistics Day under the general theme "Statistics for better decision-making — statistics for better development";

2. *Invites* all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations, such as research institutions, media and all producers and users of official statistics, to observe World Statistics Day in an appropriate manner;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures for the observance by the United Nations of World Statistics Day in 2015 and to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States and United Nations organizations;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution and on the experiences of World Statistics Day to the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session.