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Item 4 (l) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information: statistics for economies based on natural resources**Report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for
Economies Based on Natural Resources****Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2015/216 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources. It provides a summary of the fourth meeting of the steering committee of the Group and an update on the programme of work of the Group. The Commission is invited to take note of the report, in particular the structure of and timeline for the draft handbook on statistics for economies based on natural resources set out therein.

* E/CN.3/2016/1.



Report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources

I. Introduction

1. The joint initiative between Mongolia and Australia to establish the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources was discussed and endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session, held in New York from 28 February to 2 March 2012 (see [E/2012/24](#), chap. I.B, decision 43/108).
2. The primary goals of the Group are to develop methodological and practical guidelines on statistical measurements for economies based on natural resources. The Group makes recommendations by establishing best practices in respect of concepts and methods to track mining industry activities and investments in mining; to accurately measure the mining industry's contribution to the economy and to assess the impacts of mining on other social and economic sectors within the framework of the System of National Accounts. In addition, the Group aims to collaborate with countries that have economies based on natural resources and to develop practical recommendations on measuring the impacts of mining on the environment and society, ensuring the comprehensiveness, reliability, accuracy, timeliness and comparability of relevant statistical data.
3. The Group is intending to publish a handbook on statistics for economies based on natural resources, covering methodological and practical guidelines for statistical measurements.

II. Activities of the Group in 2015

4. The main focus of the Group in 2015 has been to examine methodologies to measure the impact of mining on the economy, society and the environment. The Group has established a standard set of indicators and is working towards practical recommendations and the development of implementation strategies for countries.

A. Meetings

5. Since the third meeting of the Group's steering committee, held in Vienna in 2014, the Group has:
 - (a) Drafted and submitted the report of the Group, including comments from member countries, for submission to the Statistical Commission through the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat;
 - (b) Conducted videoconferences on particular issues and action taken by member countries, with most members of the Group present;
 - (c) Drafted chapters of the handbook;
 - (d) Received extensive assistance in developing the handbook from several international organizations, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the International Monetary Fund.

Fourth meeting (Sydney, Australia)

6. The fourth meeting of the steering committee, hosted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, was held in Sydney, Australia, from 15 to 17 September 2015. It was attended by representatives from Australia, Mexico, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and UNIDO. The committee discussed the outline of the handbook and follow-up activities up to February 2016, agreeing upon an outline to be submitted to the Statistical Commission in 2016.

7. The steering committee decided:

(a) That it was necessary to accelerate countries' efforts and participation with regard to the future development of the handbook;

(b) That all chapters of the handbook should be reviewed and compiled on the basis of the committee's comments, to which best practices and case studies should be added and a set of indicators annexed;

(c) That the report of the Group should be prepared and submitted to the Statistical Commission by November 2015;

(d) That the draft of the handbook should be finalized and submitted to the Statistical Commission in 2016;

(e) That comments on the report of the Group should be invited during the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission, in 2016;

(f) That consideration should be given to organizing a side event during the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission, in the light of the need to obtain greater support for the work of the Group;

(g) That UNIDO should promote the Group's activities more broadly.

B. Governance

8. In the previous report ([E/CN.3/2015/27](#)), it was noted that Brazil and Azerbaijan had attended no meetings since 2012. Since then, the participation of several members has waned substantially, which may lead to insufficient progress on the handbook being made. If the Group does not receive the necessary commitment from members, there are concerns that the deadlines for 2017 will be in jeopardy.

C. Key outputs

9. The Group had several key outputs, including a series of presentations given at its meetings held in 2014 and 2015. The presentations represent a significant body of work undertaken by members of the Group and will be incorporated into the final handbook.

10. The outline of the handbook has been agreed upon and members have been delegated to supplement the chapters, as appropriate.

11. The report of the fourth meeting of the steering committee will be produced.

12. A draft of the handbook was produced, with members preparing chapters. It was then collated by Mongolia and provided to the Group for review and comment. The work to date on the chapters was carried out as follows:

- (a) Chapter 1: Australia;
- (b) Chapters 2 to 4: the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, Mexico and UNIDO;
- (c) Chapters 5 and 6: Mongolia and the International Monetary Fund. Further contributions are required from the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, China and Kazakhstan;
- (d) Chapters 7 and 8: Australia and India. Further contributions are required from India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Madagascar and Viet Nam;
- (e) Chapters 9 and 10: Australia.

13. A glossary for the handbook was developed on the basis of work by Mexico.

III. Future activities

A. Handbook

14. Members will continue to draft chapters of the handbook, based on the discussions at the fourth meeting of the steering committee, and submit them to the management team of the Group. The team will compile the chapters and prepare the final draft handbook, which will be sent to the Statistics Division for transmission to the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session, in 2016, for its comments.

B. Programme of work

15. The Group plans to organize videoconferences on issues pertaining to the development of the handbook and will circulate the minutes, decisions and action to be taken among members.

16. Ideas and country case studies for the handbook, based on the discussions held at the fourth meeting of the steering committee, will be made available as a background document.

17. The Statistical Commission will receive a draft of the handbook, which will also be circulated among the members of the Group.

18. The fifth meeting of the steering committee will be held in August 2016 in Mongolia. Invitations will be sent to members and an agenda will be circulated before the meeting.

IV. Action required of the Commission

19. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the report, in particular the structure of and timeline for the handbook.