

Statistical Commission

Forty-seventh session

8 – 11 March 2016

Item 3(a) of the provisional agenda

**Items for discussion and decision: Data and indicators  
for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Background document  
Available in English only

**Update on the work of the High-level Group for Partnership,  
Coordination and Capacity-building for post 2015 Monitoring**

Prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building  
for post 2015 Monitoring

(7 March 2016)

## **Update on the work of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for post-2015 Monitoring**

*(7 March 2016)*

This document contains the programme of work of the High-level Group on Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for post-2015 Monitoring for 2016 and a draft concept note for the UN World Data Forum. Reference to these two documents is in paragraph 15 of the Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for post-2015 Monitoring (E/CN.3/2016/3). The programme of work and draft concept note are attached as Annex I and Annex II, respectively.

Annex III contains a draft annotated outline of a “Global action plan for the modernisation and strengthening of statistical systems for sustainable development data”. The development of the Global Action Plan was agreed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the HLG in January 2016. The draft is a preliminary version of the outline on which members of the group are still providing inputs and has to be considered a work in progress.

## Annex I

### **Proposed programme of work for the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

At its third meeting, held from 14-15 January 2016, members of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG) agreed on the creation of two sub-groups respectively tasked with drafting an outline of a *Global Action Plan for Data* and with developing a programme for the *UN World Data Forum*.

At its fourth meeting, held on 6 March 2016, members agreed to the following work plan for March 2016 to March 2017.

#### (a) Activities of the HLG

- *April 2016:*  
Establishment of a joint subgroup of IAEG-SDG and HLG members tasked with drafting a note on immediate statistical capacity-building priorities for the implementation of global SDG indicator.
- *End of May / early June 2016:*  
Convene 5th meeting of the HLG (venue t.b.d.)

#### (b) Activities of the HLG Subgroup on the Global Action Plan for Data

- *8 March 2016:*  
Submission of initial draft outline of the Global Action Plan for Data to the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session, for its consideration.
- *By end of April 2016:*  
Finalization of revised draft of the Global Action Plan for Data and submission to all HLG members for further discussion.
- *Before UN World Data Forum (by the end of 2016):*  
Finalization of detailed HLG proposal for the Global Action Plan, taking into account discussions with stakeholders within and outside of the official statistical system.
- *February/March 2017:*  
Presentation at the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission of proposal for a Global Action Plan for Data for its consideration.

(c) Activities of the HLG Subgroup on the UN World Data Forum

- *8 March 2016:*  
Submission of concept note for the UN World Data Forum to the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session, for its consideration.
- *By end of March 2016:*  
Review of expressions of interest from Member States to host the UN World Data Forum.
- *March-June 2016:*  
Development of a detailed plan for the organization of the UN World Data Forum in consultation with other stakeholders.
- *May-June 2016:*  
Identification and appointment by the Secretariat of an event organizer / consultant responsible for the organization of the event.
- *Last quarter of 2016:*  
Convening of the UN World Data Forum.
- *February/March 2017:*  
Presentation of report to the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session on the outcomes of the UN World Data Forum.

## Annex II

### UN World Data Forum

*Draft Concept Note*

*(As of 6 March 2016)*

#### Background

Following one of the main recommendations contained in the report entitled “*A World That Counts*”<sup>1</sup>, presented in November 2014 by the United Nations Secretary-General’s Independent Expert and Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, the Statistical Commission agreed that a UN World Forum on Sustainable Development Data (UN World Data Forum) “would be the suitable platform for intensifying cooperation with various professional groups, such as information technology, geospatial information managers, data scientists, and users, as well as civil society stakeholders.”

With the guidance of the Statistical Commission, and the support of the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG), in close consultation with Member States, the World Bank and other international partners, will be leading the discussion on the organization of the UN World Data Forum to be held in late 2016.

#### Objectives

- The Forum will provide a venue for technical discussion of opportunities and challenges in applying information, data, and statistics to measure global progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Forum will engage public and private measurement experts, information collectors, statistical producers, information system specialists, and users to discuss technical issues to be resolved in the production and stewardship of the sustainable development goal indicator statistics.
- The Forum will engage with civil society, business, and the scientific and academic communities to discuss the latest information innovations and their potential application to the production and communication of sustainable development statistics.
- The Forum will facilitate a discussion of sustainable development goal indicator methods and measurement to ensure coherence within the broader UN Programme on data, statistics and geospatial information, as anchored in the mandates given by Member States through the deliberations of the UN Statistical Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Available online from <http://www.undatarevolution.org/report/>

## Potential Technical Discussion Themes

- Experiences, lessons learnt and new priorities for **statistical capacity building and data literacy**
- Strategies to strengthen basic statistical survey programmes, statistical registers and use of administrative records for the compilation of integrated statistics
- **Innovative technologies and methods** for data production, dissemination and analysis, including issues of privacy and data protection
- Integration and development of synergies between **traditional and new sources of data**, including big data and qualitative data
- **Geo-spatial information systems** and their role in the integration, analysis and communication of data for sustainable development
- Data **communication** and **visualization** tools

## Format

- The Forum will facilitate a series of technical seminars focusing on the themes above, featuring substantive presentations by invited experts representing different stakeholder groups
- Forum events could include exhibits, poster sessions and other types of interactive demonstrations
- Forum events could feature panel discussions and interviews led by professional moderators

## Organization

- The Forum will be organized under the auspices of the Statistical Commission and the guidance of the High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building in statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG).
- The Forum recognizes the unique roles and contributions of civil society, the private sector, and national statistical offices in supporting the measurement of progress for sustainable development. The particular viewpoints and comparative advantages of these partners will also be discussed during Forum events.
  - Partnerships for the mobilization of **resources and means of implementation**
  - Needs and insights from **data users**, and their role as partners in data production and analysis
  - **Data governance and standards**, including legal aspects of using new sources of data and the role of the official statistics community
- It is proposed that the Forum event take place on a biennial basis, starting in 2016.
- Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the subgroup on the UN World Data Forum of the HLG, will issue a call to Member States to host the Forum. Host countries will be selected on a rotating basis. The HLG encourages and advises the organization of regional and country level events as needed.
- The subgroup of the HLG will establish a programme committee to define the focus and content of the Forum.

## **Next steps**

- UNSD in collaboration with the HLG will identify countries to host Forum events.
- The HLG will engage with relevant groups seeking to work with the UN World Data Forum. It will discuss roles and unique contributions of its partners.

## Annex III

### Global action plan for the modernisation and strengthening of statistical systems for sustainable development data

*(Initial draft outline – as of 6 March 2016)*

#### I. Introduction

Quality and timely data are vital for enabling governments, international organisations, civil society, private sector and the general public to make informed decisions and to ensure the accountability of representative bodies. Effective planning, follow-up and review of the implementation of the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of an unprecedented amount of data and statistics at local, national, regional and global levels and by multiple stakeholders.

In the document “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”, Member States underscored the importance of “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data... to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure no one is left behind” (Paragraph 48). Furthermore, Member States recognized the crucial role of “increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity building”, and committed to addressing the gap in data collection for the targets of the 2030 Agenda, so as to better inform the measurement of progress (Paragraph 57).

National statistical systems face the urgent need to adapt and develop in order to meet the widening, increasing and evolving needs of data users, including the full implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. There are large and growing inequalities in access and ability to produce and use data and information. There are also large inequalities across countries, with some facing steeper challenges. In many countries, valuable data often remain unused because they are not available for the production of official statistics, are not available at the level of detail needed for decision-making, are not well documented and harmonised, are released too late to be relevant, or are not effectively communicated and disseminated. Despite remarkable efforts in recent years, in many parts of the world, national statistical systems continue to face these challenges. As a result, policy relevant, accurate and timely information about some aspects of people’s lives and the environment is not available, leaving many groups and individuals invisible and many development challenges poorly understood.

In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Member States noted the importance of drawing on new data sources to meet user needs. “National statistical systems have a central role in generating, disseminating and administering data. They should be supplemented with data and analysis from civil society, academia and the private sector” (para 125). The global statistical system is called to take decisive actions to transform how data and statistics are produced and disseminated to inform development policy decision, in closer partnership with stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, the private sector, and the public at large. This will entail the concerted and sustained accounting and coordination of existing efforts and the strategic identification of

investment of resources in order to significantly address existing gaps in the technical and institutional capacities of national statistical systems, and thereby improve the coverage, quality and frequency of data and statistics, made available through transparent and public access.

Today, new technologies are helping produce large amounts of data both from traditional and new sources, opening unprecedented opportunities for informing and transforming societies, and for protecting the environment. Partnering with other stakeholders from the non-official statistical community and leveraging the use of new and non-traditional data sources to satisfy the data needs for statistical production in new development areas and for timely, detailed and disaggregated data are essential to address inequalities and ensure that no one is left behind, and the most vulnerable are reached first.

At its forty-sixth session, the United Nations Statistical Commission agreed to establish a High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG), composed of Chief Statisticians from 23 national statistical offices representing other countries in their respective regions.<sup>2</sup> The HLG was tasked to promote national ownership of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development monitoring system and fostering statistical capacity building, partnerships and coordination.

## **II. Objective**

Since 2004, when the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics<sup>3</sup> was developed, strategic planning has been recognised to be a powerful tool for guiding the development of national statistics development programs, increasing political and financial support for statistics and ensuring that countries are able to produce the data and statistics needed for monitoring and evaluating their development outcomes.

At its third meeting held in New York in January 2016, HLG members agreed to develop a proposal for a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (as a successor of the Busan Action Plan for Statistics from 2011)<sup>4</sup>, with the aim to outline the necessary actions to generate regular, quality and timely data to inform sustainable development at the needed level of disaggregation and covering all groups of the population, including the more vulnerable and hard to reach. The plan is also intended to fully account and coordinate existing efforts, as well as to identify new and strategic ways to efficiently mobilize resources and thereby address the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Independent Expert and Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development as well as the priorities identified in the "Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Chair of the Statistical Commission is an ex-officio member of the HLG.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/data/statistical-capacity-building/marrakech-action-plan-for-statistics>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/Busanactionplan\\_nov2011.pdf](http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/Busanactionplan_nov2011.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-4-Transformative-agenda-for-official-statistics-E.pdf>

The Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data provides a roadmap for the modernization and strengthening of statistical systems in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Plan shall address all aspects of coordination, production and use of data for sustainable development, including but not restricted to global indicators to follow up and review the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, the plan will address both short and long-term interventions, including a focus on building the infrastructure needed to support local, national, regional and global statistical requirements. Additionally, Annex A provides a template for the reporting of current and planned activities by all relevant stakeholders.

The action plan emphasizes that trust between the producers and users of statistics is key for the effective functioning of the national, regional, and global statistical systems in full adherence with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Moreover, it is built on the principle of subsidiarity, which identifies national statistical systems, under the leadership of National Statistical Offices, as the necessary and appropriate leaders of this effort. It also recognizes the crucial role of cooperation between international organizations and regional organizations; in particular with respect to coordination and streamlining of their activities with a view to avoid duplication of efforts.

### **III. Key strategic areas and objectives**

The Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data proposes specific strategic objectives, organized around five key strategic areas, each associated with key implementation actions.

#### ***Key Strategic Area 1: Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development***

**Strategic objective 1.1:** Strengthen national statistical systems, including by increasing the coordination role of national statistical offices, and strengthen coordination among national statistical systems and between national statistical systems and regional and international organizations active in the production of data and statistics for sustainable development.

Key Actions:

- *Conduct assessments of country-needs and gaps in national statistical capacities, and assessments of available resources to potentially address these needs.*
- *Mainstream and harmonize the compilation of data for sustainable development and for SDG indicators into the regular work programmes of national statistical systems, and into existing national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) and national and sectoral development plans and priorities.*
- *Establish and review the implementation of an effective coordination mechanism for collecting, sharing, and communicating sustainable development statistics within national statistical systems, and among national and regional and international statistical systems.*

## ***Key Strategic Area 2: Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems***

**Strategic objective 2.1:** Modernize governance and institutional frameworks to allow national statistical systems meet the demands and opportunities of constantly evolving data ecosystems.

Key Actions:

- *Promote the revision of statistical laws and regulatory frameworks, where necessary, consistent with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, to: (1) enhance the status, independence and and coordination role of national statistics offices; (2) strengthen their access to data and thereby their ability to more efficiently respond to emerging data needs; and (3) improve transparency of, and public access to, official statistics.*
- *Update the Handbook of Statistical Organizations with the aim to provide guidance and best practices to achieve a modern, more integrated and coordinated national statistical system.*

**Strategic objective 2.2:** Modernize statistical standards, particularly those aimed to facilitate data integration and automation of data exchange across different stages of the statistical production process.

Key Actions:

- *Define and implement standardized structures for the exchange and integration of data and metadata on the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development and at all levels (global, regional, national and sub-national), following the SDMX and related standards.*
- *Promote interoperability of these systems to facilitate such integration.*

**Strategic objective 2.3:** Facilitate the application of new technologies and new data sources into mainstream statistical activities

Key Actions:

- *Identify specifications for interoperable, open source technologies to incorporate the flexibility in information systems needed to allow the strategic use of new and emerging technologies for official data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis.*
- *Identify main barriers to the use of new data sources, including big data, and coordinate efforts to incorporate them into mainstream statistical programmes through, inter alia, confidence- and trust-building measures, legal reforms, better funding and capacity building.*
- *Promote the development of integrated database systems to support the efficient and effective review and follow up of the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

### ***Key Strategic Area 3: Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes***

**Strategic objective 3.1:** Strengthen and expand household survey programmes, business and other economic survey programmes, population and housing census programmes, civil and vital statistics programmes and the International Comparison Programme.

Key Actions:

- *Increase harmonization and ensure country ownership of internationally sponsored household surveys programmes (such as DHS, MICS, LSMS, Child Labour Survey, WHS, CWIQ, etc.) by creating a Household Survey (HHS) Network*
- *Increase harmonization and ensure country ownership of internationally sponsored economic surveys by creating an Economic Survey Network.*
- *Support the implementation of the 2020 Population Census Round, including as integral part of integrated social survey systems.*
- *Support developing countries in implementing CRVS programmes*
- *Support for preparation and development of integrated household and business statistics programmes, with a particular focus on enabling the compilation of disaggregated data on SDGs indicators*
- *Conduct the International Comparison Programme regularly*

**Strategic objective 3.2:** Improve the quality of national statistical registers and expand the use of administrative records integrating them with data from surveys and other new data sources, for the compilation of integrated social, economic and environmental statistics.

Key Actions:

- *Develop, standardize and improve the coverage of registers of persons, property and businesses for statistical purposes*
- *Establish the preconditions for greater use of administrative data and develop the necessary infrastructure and skills of statistical staff to link administrative records with statistical registers*

**Strategic objective 3.3:** Integrate geospatial data into statistical production programmes at all levels.

Key Actions:

- *Promote the integration of modern geospatial information management systems within mainstream statistical production programmes.*

***Key Strategic Area 4: Dissemination and use of sustainable development data***

**Strategic objective 4.1:** Develop and promote innovative strategies to ensure proper dissemination and use of data for sustainable development, as well as to promote effective communication on the merits of official statistics.

Key Actions:

- *Develop effective communication and data dissemination strategies oriented to policy-makers, legislators, the media, the general public, the economy, etc.*
- *Leverage the use of e-learning platforms to share knowledge between producers and users of statistics*
- *Develop and implement educational programmes to increase data literacy and empower institutions and individuals to use statistics effectively in their own decisions.*

***Key Strategic Area 5: Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data***

**Strategic objective 5.1:** Develop and strengthen partnerships of national and international statistical systems with governments, academia, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders involved in the production and use of data for sustainable development

Key Actions:

- *Improve the transparency and access of official statistics to stakeholders.*
- *Create regular opportunities to consult with all stakeholders on the production and use of statistics for sustainable development by (i) organising a UN World Forum on Sustainable Development Data every second year; (ii) establishing similar venues for ongoing consultations and cooperation at regional and national levels*
- *Develop the institutional arrangements, and governance schemes that are needed*

*for public-private cooperation following the professional standards of official statistics.*

- *Develop an approach to ensure data quality to be adopted by data producers, including for new data sources*

### ***Key Strategic Area 6: Mobilize resources and coordinate efforts for statistical capacity building***

**Strategic objective 6.1:** Ensure that resources are available to implement the necessary programmes and actions as outlined in this global action plan (both domestic and from international cooperation)

Key Actions:

- *Provide an overview of capacity needs and consider appropriate matches between types of support and types of needs.*
- *Identify and coordinate existing resources to strategically address these needs, and identify resource gaps.*
- *Mobilize donor support towards the priorities agreed in national and regional statistical strategies.*
- *Create opportunities for participation of non-state actors in funding statistical activities through innovative financing mechanisms using means consistent with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.*
- *Promote nationally owned coordination mechanisms of capacity building initiatives*
- *Engage in communication and advocacy activities at the policy-making level to raise awareness and understanding of implementation aspects of the SDG indicator framework.*
- *Develop criteria and mechanism to set priorities for the mobilisation of resources*

## **Annex A: Information about the current and planned actions by all relevant stakeholders**

This annex presents a compendium of current and planned actions by relevant stakeholders that produce or disseminate data and statistics. It provides in the form of a matrix an easy overview of who is doing what, when, and with whom. The matrix could be ordered by the Key Strategic Area and the strategic objectives.

Example:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of the action</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Lead Stakeholder</b>	<b>Involved Stakeholders</b>	<b>Key Strategic Area</b>	<b>Strategic objective</b>
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