



UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION



**50 SESSIONS
AND COUNTING
BETTER DATA. BETTER LIVES.**



CHAIRPERSONS

1947-2019



Message from the Chair of the Statistical Commission, Zachary Mwangi (Kenya)

It is a great fortune for me to celebrate the 50th session of the Statistical Commission in my capacity as Chairperson. This is an excellent opportunity to look back and contemplate our past collective accomplishments. Since 1946, the Statistical Commission has worked tirelessly to make data comparable around the world. Ever since our founding father, Stuart A. Rice (United States), was elected Chair of the nuclear session of the Statistical Commission, government experts from every corner have come together regularly to develop the common language of statistics and to serve the global community with their technical knowledge and expertise.

Our 50th session is, as well, a timely occasion to look ahead. More than ever, the official statistical community must embrace partnership and collaborative work. We are facing the formidable task of fuelling the sustainable development agenda with reliable data. The Statistical Commission is eagerly taking on the challenges that this task represents, from further methodological development to transforming the statistical systems with innovative streak.

Let us celebrate the 50th time we sit together to discuss the technical challenges of measuring our complex reality. Let us discuss with trust and pride, trust in the technical nature of "our" Commission, and pride in our aim of improving people's lives with our work.

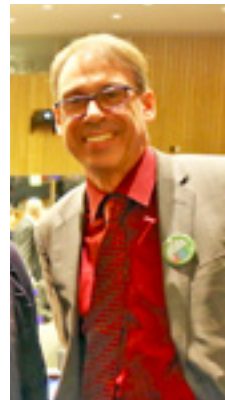
Zachary Mwangi Chege

*Chair, 50th Session of the
United Nations Statistical Commission
Nairobi, February 2019*

HIGHLIGHTS: THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION THROUGH THE YEARS

1946	■	Nuclear Session of the UN Statistical Commission (6 members)
1950	■ 5 th session	The Commission discussed the improvement needed in the availability and comparability of data on housing, crime and the treatment of offenders, social security and other measures for the aged and for depending children
1953	■ 7 th session	Endorsement of the System of National Accounts as international statistical standard
1966	■ 14 th session	First inter-agency meeting on statistical activities (now Coordinating Committee on Statistical Activities)
1970	■ 16 th session	UN Statistical Commission increased to 24 members, its current size
1976	■ 19 th session	Endorsement of the Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration
1979	■ 20 th session	The Commission requested the Secretary-General to study the problems of confidentiality and its impact upon statistical practice
1981	■ 21 st Session	The Commission expressed strong interest in the study on sex-based stereotypes and sex biases in national data systems [...] commented on the difficulty of carrying out studies on this topic at the international level
1983	■ 22 nd session	Endorsement of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics and request for its publication.
1989	■ 25 th session	Training was singled out as the component of technical cooperation requiring the greatest emphasis
1994	■ Special Session	Adoption of the the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
1997	■ 29 th session	The Commission endorsed the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS)
1999	■ 30 th session	The Statistical Commission starts meeting annually
2002	■ 33 rd session	Establishment of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)
2006	■ 37 th session	ECOSOC adopts its resolution on "Strengthening statistical capacity"
2009	■ 40 th session	The Commission recognized that climate change is an important global issue with social, economic and environmental impacts and that official statistics have an important role to contribute to closing data gaps
2015	■ 46 th session	Establishment of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators
2017	■ 48 th session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 70th anniversary of the Statistical Commission■ Endorsement of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data■ General Assembly approved the Global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda
2020	■ 51 st session	Comprehensive review of SDG indicators
2025	■ 56 th session	Comprehensive review of SDG indicators
2030	■ 61 st session	Final progress report of the SDG indicators

LOOKING AHEAD

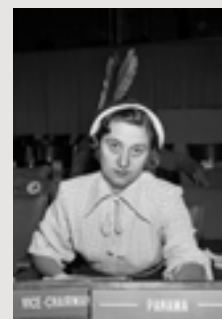


LOOKING BACK



Under the central guidance of the United Nations, the Statistical Commission came to grips with the vital substantive issues concerning the development of international statistics. The Commission has been deeply impressed by the need to grapple firmly and quickly with these issues (*Report of the 1st Session, 1947, para. 13*).

The Statistical Commission felt that many of the activities sponsored by the Economic and Social Council and its commissions will require the use of more statistical data about social questions than have hitherto been made available. Considerable improvement will be needed, for example in the availability and comparability of data on housing, crime and the treatment of offenders, social security and other measures for the aged and for depending children, ..., if important objectives are to be attained (*Report of the 5th Session, 1950, para. 96*).



The Commission paid special attention to the new regional activities in statistics, such as those represented by regional conferences of statisticians These developments were welcomed as they would do much to draw into international work the national statisticians of most countries. The system of conferences and working parties was extremely valuable in providing means for the exchange of experience at the operational level ... (*Report of the 11th Session, 1960, para. 13*).

The Commission requested the Secretary-General to study the problems of confidentiality and its impact upon statistical practice (*Report of the 20th Session, 1979, para. 117c*).



The Commission expressed strong interest in the study on sex-based stereotypes and sex biases in national data systems. It noted the existence of this problem in every society and commented on the difficulty of carrying out studies on this topic at the international level (*Report of the 21st Session, 1981, para. 97*).





The Commission reaffirmed its support of the technical cooperation work of the Statistical Office Training was singled out as the component of technical cooperation requiring the greatest emphasis (*Report of the 25th Session, 1989, summary*).

The Commission stressed that the global statistical system should welcome and be prepared to respond effectively to the requirements for statistics on social issues emerging from the World Summit for Social Development (*Report of the 28th Session, 1995, para. 64b*).



The Commission recognized that climate change is an important global issue with social, economic and environmental impacts and that official statistics have an important role to contribute to closing data gaps (*Report of the 40th Session, 2009, DEC40/101*).



unstats.un.org

🐦 @UNStats 🐦 #UN5OSC

**BIOGRAPHY BOOK of the
Statistical Commission
Chairpersons:**

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/70th-anniversary/documents/UN_Statistical_Chairs_booklet_WEB.pdf



71/313. Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,
(...)

Adopts the global indicator framework for **the Sustainable Development Goals and targets** of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (...) as a voluntary and country-led instrument that includes the initial set of indicators to be refined annually and reviewed comprehensively by the [Statistical] Commission at its fifty-first session, to be held in 2020, and its fifty-sixth session, to be held in 2025, and will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels, which will be developed by Member States;

Requests the Statistical Commission to coordinate the **substantive and technical work to develop international statistical standards, methods and guidelines**, where necessary, to fully implement the global indicator framework to follow up and review the Sustainable Development Goals and targets
(...)

Report on the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (2017)

E/2017/24 and E/CN.3/2017/35

The Statistical Commission,
(...)

adopted the **Cape Town Global Action Plan** for Sustainable Development Data (DEC 48/102f)

stressed the importance of **high-quality and disaggregated data** for the full implementation and reporting of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and global levels (DEC 48/106d)

reiterated the growing importance of the **Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics** (DEC 48/107a)

endorsed the five guiding principles of the global statistical geospatial framework (DEC 48/108c)

supported the proposal to develop methodological guidelines on how to operationalize **ICATUS 2016** and produce time-use statistics using the latest technologies (DEC 48/109c)

supported the efforts of the Committee of Experts to update the **SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting manual by 2020**, and encouraged countries to scale up experimentation and testing (DEC 48/112f)

requested the creation of a committee of experts with balanced geographical representation and with terms of reference to prepare the guidelines for **statistical business registers** (DEC 48/114d)

supported the development of the statistical framework for **measuring sustainable tourism** (DEC 48/115b)

Report on the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (2018)

E/2018/24 and E/CN.3/2018/37

The Statistical Commission,
(...)

welcomed efforts by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to improve **data flows and global reporting** (DEC 49/101f)

welcomed the proposed work of the United Nations Expert Group on **Migration Statistics**, including the revision of international recommendations on statistics for international migration (DEC 49/101j)

reiterated the importance of **statistical training and capacity-building** (DEC 49/102e)

recognized the need for stronger **coordination** and a more **efficient** United Nations statistical system, as well as the need for a **stronger voice for official statistics** within the United Nations system (DEC 49/103e)

acknowledged the importance of the Commission contributing to the **high-level political forum** on sustainable development (DEC 49/103h)

stressed the importance of balancing the **protection of confidentiality and openness of data** (DEC 49/105d)

stressed the importance of **household surveys** as a source of data for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (DEC 49/106b)

confirmed that the use of **big data** and other new data sources is essential for the **modernization** of national statistical institutions (DEC 49/107d)

expressed its support for the work of the Statistics Division in the development of a global set of **climate change statistics and indicators** (DEC 49/113b)

endorsed the international recommendations on **refugee statistics** and the technical report on statistics on **internally displaced persons** (DEC 49/115b)



The Secretariat of the Statistical Commission

The United Nations Statistics Division is committed to the advancement of the global statistical system. We compile and disseminate global statistical information, develop standards and norms for statistical activities, and support countries' efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. We facilitate the coordination of international statistical activities and support the functioning of the United Nations Statistical Commission as the highest entity of the global statistical system.

18-00105_GDU All photos © UN Photos



**TELL US WHY BETTER DATA
MAKE BETTER LIVES**
#BetterDataBetterLives

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/>

@UNStats

#UN5OSC

statcom@un.org