

# ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

51<sup>st</sup> session

Statistical Commission

@UNStats | #UN51SC



**BETTER DATA  
BETTER LIVES**

3–6 March 2020  
United Nations, New York

[unstats.un.org](https://unstats.un.org)

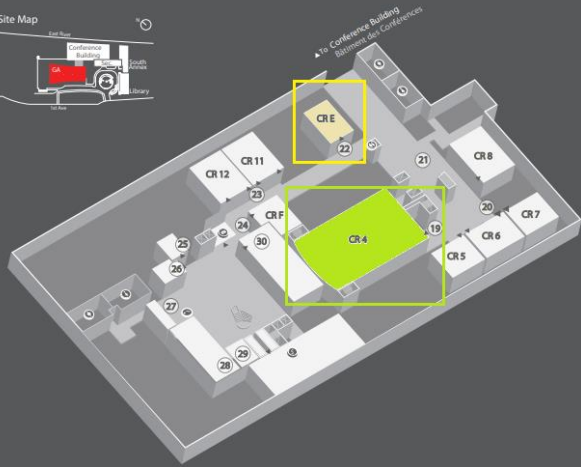
[@UNStats](https://twitter.com/UNStats)  
[#UN51SC](https://twitter.com/UN51SC)

# MAP

The Statistical Commission will take place in Conference Room 4 (highlighted in green below) from Tuesday 3 March to Friday 6 March. Side events will take place in multiple conference rooms (highlighted in yellow below).

## FIRST BASEMENT PREMIER SOUS-SOL

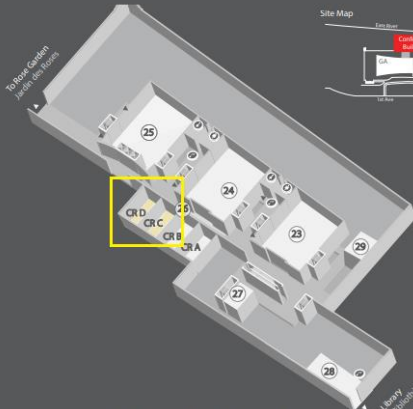
- 19 Conference Room 4  
Salle de conférence 4
- 20 Conference Room 5, 6, 7, 8  
Salles de conférence 5, 6, 7, 8
- 21 Vienna Café  
Café Vienne
- 22 Conference Room E  
Salle de conférence E
- 23 Conference Room 11, 12  
Salles de conférence 11, 12
- 24 Conference Room F  
Salle de conférence F
- 25 Briefing Room  
Salle d'accueil et d'information
- 26 Visitor's briefing room  
Salle des exposés
- 27 Visitor's Café  
Café des visiteurs
- 28 UN Gift Centre  
Boutique-cadeaux de l'ONU
- 29 Agencies Kiosk  
Comptoir de souvenirs des Nations Unies
- 30 UN Bookstore  
Librairie de l'ONU



## FIRST BASEMENT PREMIER SOUS-SOL

- 23 Conference Room 1  
Salle de conférence 1
- 24 Conference Room 2  
Salle de conférence 2
- 25 Conference Room 3  
Salle de conférence 3
- 26 Conference Room A, B, C, D  
Salle de conférence A, B, C, D
- 27 Accessibility Centre  
Centre d'accessibilité
- 28 Café de La Paix  
Café de la paix
- 29 Conference Room 9  
Salle de conférence 9

To more details  
Pour plus de détails



### Map Key - Légende :

- |                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Stair<br>Escalier          | Women's Restroom<br>Toilettes des femmes | Bank<br>Banque   |
| Elevator<br>Ascenseur      | Men's Restroom<br>Toilettes des hommes   | UN Postal Administration<br>Administration postale des Nations Unies |
| Information<br>Information |  | Drinking Fountains<br>Fontaines                                      |

Note: All entrances, public restrooms, routes and exits are wheelchair accessible.  
Remarque: Les entrées, les toilettes, les couloirs et les sorties sont tous accessibles aux personnes en fauteuil roulant.

To library  
à la bibliothèque

# WELCOME

*Dear Colleague,*

*I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.*

*It has become a tradition that we offer an orientation session to welcome our colleagues who are participating in the Statistical Commission for the first time. All of us in the United Nations Statistics Division hope that this brief introduction to the Commission and to our Division will make this week as productive and agreeable as possible for you.*

*A short questionnaire will be passed around to help us assess the impact of this orientation session. We would be most grateful to receive your feedback.*



Stefan Schweinfest

Director, Statistics Division



# OVERVIEW



The **United Nations Statistical Commission**, established in 1947, is the highest body of the global statistical system. It brings the chief statisticians of Member States together from around the world. It is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, notably the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international levels.

The **Commission** oversees the work of the **United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)** and is a functional commission of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.

During the session, delegates are encouraged to:

- Actively contribute;
- Be brief and concise in **oral interventions**; and,
- Share national practices, report routine activities or detailed expositions of methodology in **written form** rather than orally. Such country notes will be presented on the Commission website.

Delegates also have a chance to meet statisticians from:

- National Statistical Offices;
- International Organizations; and
- The Secretariat (UNSD).

# MANDATES

The terms of reference of the Commission state that it shall assist ECOSOC (ECOSOC resolutions 8 (I) of 16 February 1946; 8 (II) of 21 June 1946; and, 1566 (L) of 3 May 1971):

- a) In promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability;
- b) In the coordination of the statistical work of specialised agencies;
- c) In the development of the central statistical services of the Secretariat;
- d) In advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information; and,
- e) In promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally.



On 6 July 2017, the **General Assembly** (resolution 71/313) adopted the global indicator framework for the **Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal

Indicators, as agreed upon by the Statistical Commission at its 48<sup>th</sup> session, as a voluntary and country-led instrument that includes the initial set of indicators to be refined annually and reviewed comprehensively by the Commission at its 51<sup>st</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> sessions.

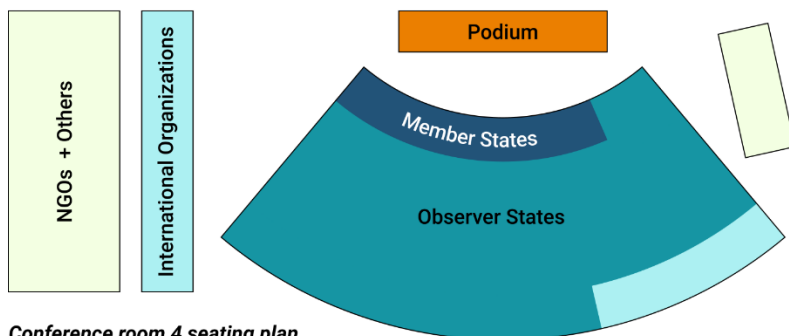
It also requested the Commission to coordinate the substantive and technical work to develop international statistical standards, methods and guidelines, where necessary, to fully implement the global indicator framework to follow up and review the Sustainable Development Goals and targets; and to further refine and improve the global indicator framework.

# MEMBERSHIP

The **Commission** consists of **24 Member States** of the United Nations elected by the **ECOSOC** to serve a term of four years based on an equitable geographical distribution as follows:

Region	N	Current members
Africa	5	Egypt – Equatorial Guinea – Madagascar Sierra Leone – South Africa
Asia	4	China – Japan – Kuwait Republic of Korea
Eastern Europe	4	Belarus – Czechia – Georgia Russian Federation
Latin America & the Caribbean	4	Brazil – Colombia – Mexico – Peru
Western Europe & Others	7	Canada – Denmark – Germany - Netherlands - Switzerland - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - United States of America

All other States are considered **Observers**, but the Commission traditionally treats Observer and United Nations Member States equally during its discussions. The **Chair**, **3 Vice-chairs** and the **Rapporteur** are the five officers of the Commission, known as the **Bureau**. The Bureau is elected for a one-year term with the expectation that they will serve for a further year if available. Nominations of these officers are made by the Commission with elections held at the beginning of the session. In practice, elections

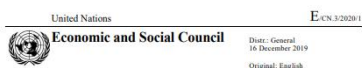


*Conference room 4 seating plan*

The agenda is organised in the following sections:

- Opening;
- Election of officers for the year;
- Adoption of the agenda and timetable;
- Items for discussion and decision (*Tuesday – Thursday morning*);
- Items for information (*Thursday afternoon*);
- UNSD programme questions (*Friday morning*);
- Provisional agenda and dates for next year's session; and,
- Report of the Commission on its fiftieth session

The adoption of the agenda is usually a routine matter; last-minute changes are unusual.



Statistical Commission  
Fifty-first session  
1-6 March 2020  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda  
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

#### Provisional agenda and annotations

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Items for discussion and decision:
  - (a) Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  - (b) Coordination of statistical programmes;
  - (c) Forum of economic statistics;
  - (d) National accounts;
  - (e) International trade and business statistics;
  - (f) Price statistics;
  - (g) International Comparison Programme;
  - (h) Environmental-economic accounting;
  - (i) Agricultural and rural statistics;
  - (j) Demographic statistics;
  - (k) Civil registration and vital statistics;
  - (l) Health statistics;
  - (m) Gender statistics;
  - (n) Refugee statistics;
  - (o) Governance, peace and security statistics;
  - (p) Regional statistical development;
  - (q) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
  - (r) Management and modernization of statistical systems;

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**Items for discussion and decision** are for the Commission to discuss and make decisions or take actions. The chair will mention the relevant report related to the item, the author will give an oral introduction, the chair will open the floor for discussion, and a summary will be made by the Secretariat (UNSD staff) after the discussion of each item.

**Items for information** refer to progress reports, which the Commission takes note of usually without further debate. Information items are handled as a block. However, the Chair will offer the Commission the opportunity to identify information items for which clarifications or updates are needed.

# DOCUMENTS

There are two types of documents related to the Commission:

- **Official documents:** Formally edited and available in the six official languages of the UN. They are subject to a strict word limit and submitted to the Secretariat in November. They carry a formal document reference. For example E/CN.3/2020/1 where **E** is for ECOSOC, **CN.3** is identifying number for Statistical Commission, **2020** is the year, and **1** is the document number.
- **Background documents:** Accompanying a specific agenda item. The Secretariat does not formally edit background documents and therefore, do not have a word limit. Commonly, background documents are used to present substantive items for adoption/endorsement (such as Frameworks or Standards), whereas Official Documents commonly provide a report for the agenda item. While they are typically available in English, Member States are encouraged to support their translation. Background documents become available at different times before the start of the Commission session.

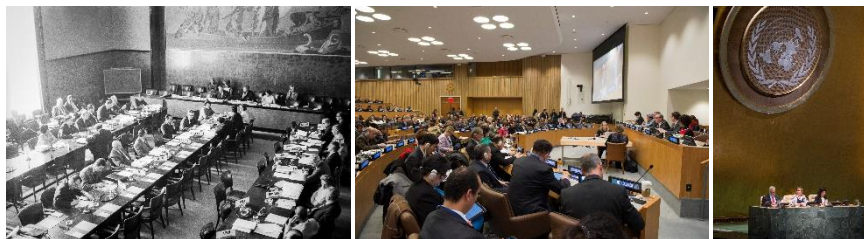
All **official documents** will be available electronically both on the Commission website (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/>) and on the PaperSmart portal. They can be printed on-demand in the "Print Shop", located on floor 1B (by the escalator).

Copies of **background documents** may be available on side tables in the conference room.

Only the **draft report of the session** and any **draft resolutions** (if applicable) will be distributed desk to desk to delegations.



## • PAST SESSIONS •



50<sup>th</sup> session (2019): Adopted the **United Nations National Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual for Official Statistics** and the recommendations contained therein.

48<sup>th</sup> session (2017): Adopted the **Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals** and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

47<sup>th</sup> session (2016): Agreed, as a practical starting point, the **proposed Global Indicator Framework** for the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

46<sup>th</sup> session (2015): Established the **Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)**. Launched the **2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme**.

44<sup>th</sup> session (2013): Endorsed the **Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES)**. Established the **Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information**. Revised the **Central Product Classification (CPC)**.

43<sup>rd</sup> session (2012): Adopted the **System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)**.

Special Session (1994): Adopted the **Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**.

# • PAST CHAIRS •



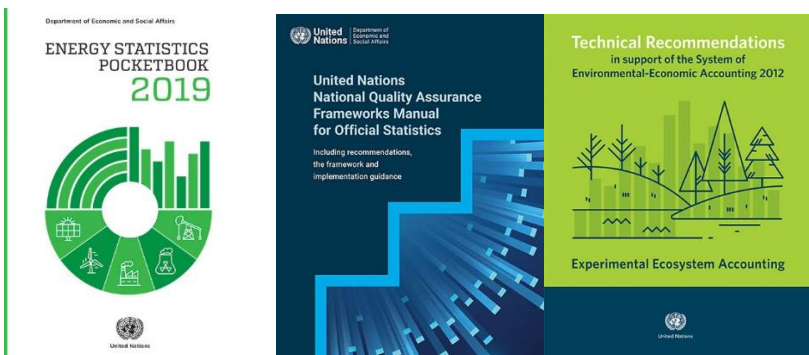
# SECRETARIAT (UNSD)

The UNSD acts as **Secretariat** of the Commission and is committed to the advancement of the global statistical system. It compiles and disseminates global statistical information, develops standards and norms for statistical activities, and supports countries' efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. UNSD facilitates the coordination of international statistical activities and supports the functioning of the United Nations Statistical Commission as the highest entity of the global statistical system.

Functions include:

- Data (collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information);
- Methodology (Standardization of statistical methods, classifications and definitions);
- Capacity Development (Technical cooperation programme); and,
- Coordination (coordination of international statistical programmes and activities).

UNSD disseminates statistical data compilations and develops methodological publications:



All publications available at: <https://unstats.un.org/>

# RESOURCES and ASSISTANCE

You are encouraged to download all information related to the Commission from its website, including agenda, official documents, background documents, calendar of side events and a note with practical information about New York:



<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/>

Due to the technical nature of the Commission, there are several acronyms used by multiple international organisations, commonly used acronyms are:

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank	<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank	<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>AITRS</b>	Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics	<b>IRENA</b>	International Renewable Energy Agency
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	<b>ISI</b>	International Statistical Institute
<b>BIS</b>	Bank for International Settlements	<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community	<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>CEMAC</b>	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa	<b>OIC</b>	Organization of the Islamic Conference
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	<b>OSGHEY</b>	Office of UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States	<b>PPD</b>	Partners in Population and Development
<b>EASTC</b>	Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre	<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>ECA</b>	Economic Commission for Africa	<b>SESRI</b>	Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries
<b>ECE</b>	Economic Commission for Europe	<b>UNCCC</b>	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America & Caribbean	<b>UNCTAD</b>	UN Conference on Trade and Development
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States	<b>UNDP</b>	UN Environment Programme
<b>EEC</b>	Eurasian Economic Commission	<b>UNEP</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>EFTA</b>	European Free Trade Association	<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>ESCAP</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific	<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>ESCSWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	<b>UN-Habitat</b>	UN Human Settlements Programme
<b>Eurostat</b>	Statistical Office of the European Union	<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization	<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children's Fund
<b>GCC-STAT</b>	Statistical Center of the Gulf Cooperation Council	<b>UNIDO</b>	UN Industrial Development Organization
<b>IADB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank	<b>UNISDR</b>	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency	<b>UNODC</b>	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>ICAO</b>	The International Civil Aviation Organization	<b>UNWTO</b>	World Tourism Organization
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>IDEA</b>	Int. Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	<b>WMO</b>	World Meteorological Organisation
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization	<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

For any further enquiries and assistance, please do not hesitate to speak to a UNSD Staff Member, who can be recognised by their identifying staff badge. Finally, you are encouraged to tweet and engage with other participants using the #UN51SC hashtag.