



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
14 December 2020

Original: English

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## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-second session

1–3 and 5 March 2021

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda\*\*

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

## **Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

### **Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2020/211 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report provides a summary of the recent activities of the High-level Group relating to its organization of the first virtual United Nations World Data Forum, held from 19 to 21 October 2020, including the launch of an outcome statement entitled “Global data community’s response to COVID-19: data for a changing world”; the preparations of a stocktaking and recommendations on approaches to data stewardship; and updates on the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data.

The Commission will also have before it two background documents, on the virtual United Nations World Data Forum outcome statement entitled “Global data community’s response to COVID-19: data for a changing world” and the way forward, and on approaches to data stewardship.

Points for decision by the Commission are set out in paragraph 27 of the report.

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 January 2021.

\*\*E/CN.3/2021/1.



# Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## I. Introduction

1. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was established by the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session. It is composed of representatives of 22 national statistical offices and operates under the auspices of the Commission. In its decision 46/101, the Commission tasked the High-level Group with providing strategic leadership for the implementation process relating to the Sustainable Development Goals as it concerned statistical monitoring and reporting and fostering statistical capacity-building, partnership and coordination (see [E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40](#)).

## II. Membership

2. As outlined in the terms of reference of the High-level Group, its members represent the countries in their respective subregions and are expected to consult on a regular basis with those countries to reflect regional perspectives in the work of the Group. To reflect the strategic nature of the Group, the representative of each member is at the level of the chief statistician. In 2020, two new Co-Chairs have been appointed by the Group: the President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ola Awad, replacing Ayush Ariunzaya of Mongolia; and the Director General of the Institute of Statistics of Albania, Elsa Dhuli, replacing Camilo Ceita of Angola. The current membership of the High-level Group is set out in annex I to the present report.

3. As outlined in its terms of reference, to engage the wider data ecosystem in its work, the High-level Group invites non-members and observers, known as issue partners, with expertise in a specific area of interest to contribute their technical advice and share their experiences. The criteria for their invitation depend on the strategic priorities established by the Group and the nature of the topics for discussion at each meeting or stage of a workstream. Before High-level Group meetings, the Co-Chairs agree upon the issue partners to invite on the basis of the recommendation of Group members and the items on the agenda. In 2018, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century was designated by the Group as a “standing issue partner”, meaning that it is invited to attend all open segments of the meetings. During 2020, issue partners that participated in one or more meetings have included the five regional commissions (Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), the World Bank, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Open Data Watch. Annex II to the present report provides summary details of the meetings held during 2020.

### III. United Nations World Data Forum

#### A. Background

4. The United Nations World Data Forum is organized by the High-level Group, in accordance with Statistical Commission decisions 46/101 and 48/102, with substantive support from the programme committee of the Forum, under the guidance of the Commission and in close consultation with Member States, international partners and other stakeholders (see [E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40](#) and [E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35](#)). The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat supports the organization of the Forum in its role as secretariat of the High-level Group, the programme committee and the Commission. The first Forum was hosted by Statistics South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa, from 15 to 18 January 2017. The second Forum was hosted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority of the United Arab Emirates in Dubai from 22 to 24 October 2018.

#### B. Virtual Forum

5. As a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it became necessary to postpone the third United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in Bern from 18 to 21 October 2020, to 3 to 6 October 2021. A virtual Forum was held instead, from 19 to 21 October 2020, to satisfy demand for the latest data solutions and thinking to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, more urgently, the monitoring and recovery from the pandemic. Across the more than 70 live-streamed and pre-recorded sessions encompassing the six thematic areas of the Forum, progress in addressing some of the key challenges related to sustainable development were showcased, new initiatives launched and new work streams identified. The Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, opened the virtual Forum, whereupon pre-recorded remarks were delivered by the Director General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Chief Executive Officer of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mark Suzman, and the Swiss Federal Councillor for Home Affairs, Alain Berset.

6. By the time that the virtual Forum began, 10,000 registrations had been received from people residing in more than 180 countries. Over 300 organizations were represented among the speakers during the three-day (19-hour) live programme, covering data communities from academia, civil society, the private sector, national statistical offices and other government agencies. The virtual format allowed for the participation of an expanded and more diverse audience in terms of location, age and data community affiliation. Despite the challenges of work and travel conditions under the pandemic, there was a celebratory feeling of coming together as a community to discuss and explore the use of data in response to the pandemic and getting back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The programme of the Forum was developed by a programme committee composed of representatives of various data communities. Over 500 proposals were received through an open call for proposals that ended in February 2020. By April 2020, the committee had created a shortlist of those proposals based on multiple rounds of review, using criteria such as whether the proposal showed relevance or impact in subject matter, innovation in content and creativity in session format and demonstrated concrete and practical experiences, as well as whether they showed, as a whole, a balanced composition and content reflecting six thematic areas. The High-level Group, as the guiding body, reviewed the shortlisted sessions and took the final decision on the programmatic content.

8. At the same time, the programme committee also discussed and drew up contingency plans for circumstances in which a physical meeting of the Forum could not be held. In June 2020, two questionnaires were circulated among prospective attendees and session organizers to gauge interest, expectations and needs if the Forum became a virtual event. A total of 800 responses were received from prospective attendees; among prospective organizers, around half indicated an interest in continuing to organize their session under a virtual format. Organizers were also given an opportunity to adjust their proposal to reflect the changing context brought about by the pandemic. When the virtual Forum was announced in July 2020, the programme committee and the secretariat used this valuable information to design and implement the virtual Forum. In the same month, the High-level Group once again reviewed and signed off on the new programme and the other plans for the virtual Forum.

9. Taking into account the feedback from previous Forums, the virtual Forum was aimed at attracting more participation from young people and underrepresented regions. A youth video competition was organized in September entitled “1 minute voices of youth”, where anyone between the ages of 15 and 24 years could submit a 1-minute video in any of the six official languages of the United Nations on how data have an impact on their life, family and local community and have changed the world for the better. Ten videos were shortlisted from 50 entries and the top three winning videos were announced during the closing session.

10. In addition, more communication materials, including press releases, logos and other branding, were translated into the six official languages of the United Nations during the virtual Forum to attract greater attendance from underrepresented regions. In August 2020, the Director of the Statistics Division wrote to chief statisticians across all national statistical offices to engage them in promoting the virtual Forum, requesting a focal point to receive and distribute information on the virtual Forum among their networks, especially to all staff within the national statistical offices, across the national statistical system and other analytical communities within Governments. This contributed to the significant representation from more than 180 countries.

11. Two thirds of participants reported in their feedback that the virtual Forum was better than expected, and around 90 per cent rated the virtual Forum in the top two categories of a five-point scale for organization, structure, usefulness of information and knowledge of speakers.

### **C. Virtual Forum outcome statement, entitled “Global data community’s response to COVID-19: data for a changing world”, and the way forward**

12. The Forum concluded with the outcome statement entitled “Global data community’s response to COVID-19: data for a changing world” (see annex III to the present report). The statement is an acknowledgement that during the pandemic the demand for data and statistics is greater than ever and a critical part of building back a more equitable, sustainable and resilient future, but they remain in short supply in many parts of the world.

13. The response appeals to the entire data community to come together to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate action on the Sustainable Development Goals. It resolves to ensure data to leave no one behind, trust and privacy in data and increased investments in data to respond more effectively to the pandemic and future disasters and to renew the call made in the Dubai Declaration, from the second Forum, for an innovative funding mechanism to help to implement

the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, the outcome document launched at the first Forum and adopted by the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session.

14. In order to raise awareness of the critical importance of data in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the High-level Group will seek opportunities to share the outcome document with policymakers, including at high-level forums, and with intergovernmental bodies.

15. The outcome statement was prepared by a subgroup of the High-level Group comprising Albania, Angola, Mexico, the Philippines, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the State of Palestine, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the secretariat. In December 2019, this subgroup began its work on the outcome document for the third United Nations World Data Forum. It had progressed to an advanced draft by its third meeting, in June 2020, when it had to consider contingencies for a different document in the event of a virtual Forum. As the virtual Forum was announced, the subgroup concluded and parked its work on the outcome document for the third Forum and began drafting the outcome statement for the virtual Forum for public consultation. This was, by design, a more concise statement focused on data issues in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. A draft of the outcome statement was agreed upon by the High-level Group and prepared for public consultation between 5 August and 10 September 2020, when over 150 responses were collected. Respondents were also given the opportunity to vote on the tagline or choose an alternate for the outcome statement. A list of taglines was shortlisted from those suggested during consultation and put to a public final vote, during which “Data for a changing world” was chosen.

17. The final version of the outcome document was updated to reflect the language changes recommended during the public consultation, with the aim to use the other more detailed input received to inform the work on the outcome document for the third Forum by the subgroup. Plans for finalizing the document include a second open consultation, to be held in early 2021, focusing on gathering new commitments and actions by the data and donor communities. Further details on the responses received from the public consultation and development of the outcome document to be launched at the third Forum are contained in a background document entitled “The data community’s response to COVID-19 and the way forward”.

#### **D. Preparations for the third United Nations World Data Forum**

18. The next physical meeting of the United Nations World Data Forum is now scheduled to be held in Bern from 3 to 6 October 2021, to be hosted by the Government of Switzerland, with substantive help from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The High-level Group and the secretariat (the Division) will take the opportunity to renew the membership of the programme committee following the virtual Forum, but most members will remain in place to oversee the third Forum as originally intended. The most recent list of programme committee members, which currently consists of 24 members and includes the High-level Group’s two Co-Chairs, can be found on the Forum’s website.<sup>1</sup> The host country is an ex officio member of the programme committee.

19. The programme committee will again review the session proposals shortlisted for the third Forum. It will also establish a process to allow proposers to renew their proposals, as well as allow some new proposals to reflect new priorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the theme of getting back on track to achieving the

<sup>1</sup> See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/undataforum/partners/>.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The host country and the secretariat, with advice from the programme committee, will evaluate the optimal logistical arrangements for the third Forum, in accordance with the pandemic situation nearer the time and the benefits of mixing virtual and physical arrangements to form a hybrid event.

#### **E. Selection of the host country for the fourth in-person United Nations World Data Forum**

20. The fourth in-person meeting of the United Nations World Data Forum was originally expected to be held in 2022. However, given the postponement of the third Forum, the High-level Group will consider moving the fourth Forum to 2023. Early in 2020, a call for expressions of interest in hosting the next Forum was made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York with a deadline for reply of 31 March 2020. Those who submitted an expression of interest were sent further instructions on how to submit their detailed bid and the criteria by which their bid would be assessed by the High-level Group. The Group will consider the next steps in how to decide on the next host country as early as possible in order to allow the chosen host country sufficient time to plan the fourth Forum.

### **IV. Data stewardship**

21. Following the adoption of decision 51/120 by the Commission, the High-level Group embarked on work to prepare to launch a broader discussion on approaches to data stewardship by national statistical offices on the basis of case studies provided by members of the Group, other non-member national statistical offices and other issue partners.

22. The background document entitled “Approaches to data stewardship” provides a summary of the case studies of existing practices attributed to a data steward approach. The High-level Group wishes to thank the following organizations for providing these studies: the national statistical offices that provided information on the situation for their organizations in Argentina, China, Colombia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the case studies on the position of a Chief Data Officer separate from the national statistical offices in France, Estonia, Mexico and the city of Los Angeles. The work was supported by the subgroup of the Group, comprising Argentina, Finland, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, the State of Palestine and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

23. The case studies revealed a wide range of approaches to data stewardship, with different levels of involvement from the national statistical offices. They provide ample material as a starting point for the discussions on what it means to adopt a data stewardship approach, but further work by a wider group of countries and stakeholders is needed to provide guidance and specific recommendations in this area, as requested by the Commission at its fifty-first session. Beyond a more developed model for data stewardship, it may be possible to develop a series of tools to guide implementation by national statistical offices. The terms of reference for a proposed new working mechanism to develop guidance for national statistical offices on issues related to data stewardship are included in annex IV to the present report.

## **V. Updates on the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data**

24. In 2021, two former subgroups of the High-level Group will merge to restart the work on the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and will prepare and present a background document on this area to the Commission at its fifty-third session, in 2022.

## **VI. 2021 workplan and membership rotation**

25. During its twentieth meeting, the High-level Group agreed on a workplan for 2021 (see annex V to the present report).

26. In 2021, as stipulated in the High-level Group's terms of reference, there will be a rotation of members from each region, with new members beginning their term on 1 June. The process is managed by the regional statistical commissions, assisted by the Statistics Division of the regional commissions. New members nominated as part of this rotation will overlap with members rotated to ensure stability and maintain the institutional knowledge of the Group during 2021.

## **VII. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

27. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To take note of the present report;**

(b) **To approve the way forward to develop guidance for national statistical offices on issues related to data stewardship, including the establishment of a working group within the Commission (see annex IV), open to interested countries and other stakeholders;**

(c) **To approve the way forward to develop the outcome document for the third United Nations World Data Forum;**

(d) **To review and approve the proposed workplan of the High-level Group for 2021 as set out in annex V.**

## Annex I

### **Current membership of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The following countries are members of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as of November 2020:

#### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

Angola, Burundi, Senegal and South Africa

#### **Northern Africa and Western Asia**

Morocco, Saudi Arabia and State of Palestine

#### **Asia and the Pacific**

China, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines and Tajikistan

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

#### **North America and Europe**

Albania, Finland, Hungary, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

#### **Chair of the Statistical Commission<sup>1</sup>**

Japan

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<sup>1</sup> The Chair of the Statistical Commission is an ex officio member of the High-level Group.



## Annex II

### **Meetings of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

#### **I. Seventeenth meeting, 7 May 2020, virtual meeting**

1. During this virtual two-hour meeting, the topics of discussion were the logistics, programme and outcome document for the forthcoming United Nations World Data Forum, the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on preparations and opportunities to use the Forum to tackle some of the data issues arising from the pandemic. Other topics were the introduction of a new work area on data stewardship; an update on the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan on Sustainable Development Data from key partners (the World Bank, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the development assistance ministries of Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); and plans and arrangements to showcase data and statistics during the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development and World Statistics Day.

#### **II. Eighteenth meeting, 11 June 2020, virtual meeting**

2. During this virtual two-hour meeting, the High-level Group received an update from the Swiss chief statistician on preparations for the United Nations World Data Forum following the postponement of the programme and registration. Both the Group and the Forum programme committee are actively looking at the contingencies for a potential postponement of the physical event and the holding of the Forum in a virtual format. Contingencies cover not only the logistics and the programme but also any outcome document or statement to be released following the virtual/physical event and the plans and timing for voting on the next host and the holding of the next Forum. During the discussion, an update was given on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the statistical chiefs of the five regional commissions. The other key topic of the meeting was the preparation of a scoping paper on data stewardship for the next session of the Statistical Commission, in 2021. The scoping study will include case studies and examples of data stewardship from around the world to inform the goal of improving the use of data in society through four outcomes: better governance, better collaboration, better methods and better access. While the scoping study will be led by national statistical offices, many parts of the global data community will be called upon to contribute and provide examples for this work. During the meeting, representatives of Open Data Watch, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network were the first to give their response to the scoping paper.

#### **III. Nineteenth meeting, 14 September 2020, virtual meeting**

3. During this virtual two-hour meeting, held the day before registration for the virtual Forum opened, the High-level Group met to discuss final preparations and received an update on the work on data stewardship, financing the Cape Town Global Action Plan and a forward look at events to be held during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly and World Statistics Day on 20 October 2020.

#### **IV. Twentieth meeting, 12 November 2020, virtual meeting**

4. During this virtual two-and-a-half-hour meeting, the High-level Group took note of the outcome and impact of the virtual Forum, received input from parts of the programme committee and discussed preparations for the next Forum, to be held in Bern in 2021. The Group, with input from issue partners, reviewed the progress made on data stewardship on the basis of the first draft of the background document, which included a condensed timetable for further consultation and terms of reference for a working group to take the work forward. The Group also reviewed preparations for the outcome document of the next Forum on the basis of another background document that set out the way forward for its launch at the United Nations World Data Forum in 2021. In a closed part of the meeting, the members discussed the 2021 workplan, including the timing, process and future host of the Forum, and agreed on the Group's report to the Statistical Commission.

**Annex III<sup>1</sup>****Global data community's response to Covid-19  
Data for a changing world**

**Announced at the closing session of the 2020 virtual UN World Data Forum  
Wednesday, 21 October 2020  
prepared by the HLG-PCCB following an open and public consultation**

**I. Preamble, the impact of Covid-19**

1. We, the participants of the United Nations World Data Forum representing the global data ecosystem of different data user and producer communities come together at a virtual session of the Forum to support the ongoing evidence-based response to the Covid-19 pandemic where the demand for data and statistics are greater than ever but they are in short supply in many parts of the World
2. Observe at the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the importance of continued international cooperation to tackle these substantial supply side issues which impair Government's and the public's actions in response to this pandemic, future disasters and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
3. Reiterate at the marking of the third World Statistics Day on the 20th October 2020 the importance of connecting the World with data we trust
4. Reaffirm the urgency of implementing the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) and the Dubai Declaration to finance the development of more timely, high-quality, disaggregated, geospatially enabled data; that is relevant, well-documented, interoperable and open by default while respecting the right to privacy; as needed to inform the response to the pandemic and other disasters
5. Recognise access to affordable information can be achieved by strengthening national statistical systems, the national statistical office as coordinator of this system, and national geospatial information management; through investment in data tools and platforms to gather and communicate information that engages users and ensures the continuity of statistical and data operations
6. Increasingly aware that data and official statistics are a critical part of getting back on track to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to build a more equitable, sustainable and resilient future

**II. Resolve to improve data systems, the current actions**

7. We call for accelerated action on the implementation of the CTGAP and Dubai declaration agreed in previous Forums as a key response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the achievement of the SDGs. We highlight our shared response to do the following:
  - Create data to leave no one behind where we continue to develop disaggregation in data to mainstream gender equality, integrate geospatial and statistical information, and define common standards and tools to ensure that everyone is counted;

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<sup>1</sup> The present annex is being issued without formal editing.

- Promote data literacy and empower the public, policymakers, planners and decision-takers to understand and use data effectively; while supporting the reduction of misinformation and disinformation;
- Maintain trust and privacy in data by; full engagement with users, protection in law, regulation and common practice for both individuals and businesses, whilst ensuring transparency and accessibility to data that is of public interest;
- Develop capacity to modernise data systems not only at the national level, but also at the local and subnational levels, especially among lower-income and more vulnerable countries, to generate public data that are fit for purpose, open, interoperable and nationally coordinated; with special attention to the coverage of the poorest and most vulnerable populations; including investment in basic statistical infrastructure such as census, survey and registration systems;
- Encourage the establishment of more data partnerships, whether public-public or public-private, to work on new data sources, tools and platforms to increase data availability and complement basic statistical infrastructure;
- Increase investments in data to respond more effectively to the Covid-19 pandemic, future disasters and address the huge data gap in informing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; thereby helping to improve data inequality and close the digital divide across the World.

### **III. Future outlook of data in the recovery**

8. We will continue to make progress on an innovative funding mechanism for financing data and statistical development as called for in the Dubai declaration recognising that; while each part we play in the data ecosystem is unique and irreplaceable, only by working together can we make any such mechanism sustainable.
9. We look forward to meeting together again to review and expand on this response and share further experiences of tackling the Covid-19 pandemic through data at the third United Nations World Data Forum in Bern, Switzerland between 3 and 6 October 2021.

## Annex IV

### Terms of reference for the working group on data stewardship

#### I. Background

1. The topic of data stewardship and the role of statistical offices in the new data ecosystem was introduced to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session, when the Commission requested the establishment of a working mechanism open to other stakeholders and linked to existing initiatives at the global and regional levels to address the issue of data stewardship and the role of statistical offices in the new data ecosystem.
2. As a result, the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development took on this initial work to carry out a stocktaking exercise and provided this information as a background document to the Commission at its fifty-second session.
3. The background paper entitled “Approaches to data stewardship” provides a summary of the case studies of existing practices attributed to a data steward approach. They provided ample material as a starting point for the discussions on what it means to adopt a data stewardship approach for national statistical offices; however, further work by a wider group of countries and stakeholders is needed.

#### II. Objectives

4. The primary objectives of the working group include the following:
  - (a) Enhance knowledge and provide recommendations in respect of data stewardship, including approaches to governance, collaboration, methods and access, which can be applied to a wider data ecosystem, taking into account different national statistical office starting points;
  - (b) Promote the commitment of the statistical community and other stakeholders to work on the implementation of data governance in the national statistical system, in particular through the national statistical office’s coordination role;
  - (c) Promote collaboration around data, whether public-public or public-private, that allows the regular use of public interest data for the generation of official statistics, preserving confidentiality and privacy;
  - (d) Improve the performance of national data ecosystems through the expansion of methods and access inspired from a data stewardship approach.

#### III. Membership

5. The working group will consist of representatives of national statistical offices and other stakeholders, including international and regional organizations and civil society organizations. The Chair will be assumed by a representative of a national statistical office, with assistance from another member of the group. The group will comprise country representatives from all regions.
6. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat will serve as the secretariat of the group.

#### **IV. Organization of work**

7. The group will work through electronic exchanges and periodic meetings whenever possible. Where feasible, the meetings will be conducted in conjunction with other meetings being held throughout the year.

8. The group will conduct its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, inviting experts, as appropriate, from civil society, the private sector and academia and other professional bodies to contribute their knowledge and experiences on data governance.

9. The group will be able to determine the integration of “task forces” to advance with greater speed in the development of specific topics, as well as convene forums and workshops in which specialized or emerging new topics are discussed in depth.

#### **V. Expected duration**

10. The group will report to the Commission at its fifty-third session, in 2022, on the work of the group, including recommendations on whether its work is complete or needs to continue.

#### **VI. Proposed activities**

11. In line with the mandate and further guidance given by the Commission, the group will carry out its activities, including the following:

(a) Coordinate further consultation on the role of national statistical offices as data stewards, supported by the secretariat;

(b) Continue to expand on the stocktaking of case studies of both national statistical offices with legal and/or administrative powers to perform data steward functions and those national statistical offices that exercise any of their functions without an explicit mandate. The enhanced stocktaking will include, where possible, any evaluation criteria used in the decision to invest in these functions or the impact that they make;

(c) Review the definitions, terminology and methodological developments and issues related to data stewardship, including data governance, collaboration, methods and access, and how to conduct and institutionalize this approach through agreements such as for sharing data with an emphasis on safeguarding privacy;

(d) Develop recommendations on approaches to data stewardship for national statistical offices, including strengthening their capacities as data service providers.

## Annex V

### **Proposed workplan for 2021 for the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

#### **1. Review case studies on data stewardship**

Develop a review document to be submitted to the Statistical Commission.

*Deliverable:* Review document on case studies on data stewardship, to be submitted to the Commission at its fifty-second session, in March 2021

#### **2. Preparations for the United Nations World Data Forum, 3–6 October 2021, Bern**

- (a) Prepare inputs/consultations as requested by the programme committee;
- (b) Suggest keynote speakers and arrangements for the closing session;
- (c) Contribute to other sessions as needed;
- (d) Review and approve final programme;
- (e) Prepare outcome document for the 2021 United Nations World Data Forum:
  - (i) A subgroup will prepare the outcome document;
  - (ii) Members of the subgroup currently include Albania, Mexico, the Philippines, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the State of Palestine, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the secretariat.

*Deliverables:*

- Final programme of the United Nations World Data Forum
- Outcome document to be presented in Bern at the United Nations World Data Forum, 2021

#### **3. Further activities on the financing mechanism and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data**

Joint review group on the financing mechanism and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data:

- (i) Merge two pre-existing subgroups to review ongoing efforts in this area, including work done by the Bern Network on Financing for Development Data and the World Bank, and highlight areas where most urgent action is needed;
- (ii) Members of this merged subgroup are Hungary, Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century.

*Deliverable:* Paper on the review of the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan, to be submitted to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-third session, in March 2022

**4. Meetings of the High-level Group**

- (a) Twenty-second meeting: February 2021, Statistical Commission, virtual;
  - (b) Twenty-third meeting, on the Forum programme/outcome document: May 2021;
  - (c) Twenty-fourth meeting, on the Forum programme/outcome document: July 2021;
  - (d) Twenty-fifth meeting: October 2021, Bern:
    - (i) *3 October 2021, a.m.* To review the proposals for the United Nations World Data Forum 2022/23 and reach a decision on the host country, to be announced on the last day of the Forum, 2021;
    - (ii) *7 October 2021, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.* To present the initial review of the United Nations World Data Forum, 2021, and prepare a short summary document on lessons learned; additional topics will be added, as needed.
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