

Economic and Social Council – Coordination and Management Meeting
Item 18 (c): Economic and environmental questions: Statistics

Introduction of the Vice-Chair of the UN Statistical Commission, Mr. Anil Arora (Canada)
New York, 3 June 2020

Dear Mr. Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council,
Ambassadors, distinguished colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Economic and Social Council in my capacity as Vice-Chairperson of the Statistical Commission. I thank you for the opportunity to present the work of the Statistical Commission and summarize the most recent outcomes of the Commission's session in March this year.

For over 70 years, the Statistical Commission has worked tirelessly to make data comparable around the world. Government experts from every corner of our planet come together to develop the common language of statistics and to serve the global community with their technical knowledge and expertise. This year, the Statistical Commission held its 51st session, which was, in fact, the last intergovernmental body to gather for a physical meeting in New York before the pandemic set in.

The main session was attended by more than 500 delegates, from 120 countries, 50 international agencies and a number of civil society organizations.

We successfully concluded with the adoption of 28 technical decisions, which will guide the future work of the Statistics Division of DESA, as well as of the entire UN statistical system as a whole.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to draw your attention to two important decisions by the Commission:

First, the Commission successfully negotiated the Draft resolution, “Strengthening coordination of the statistical programmes in the United Nations system,” which is included in the report for adoption by the Council. In this resolution, member states recognize the urgent need for improved efficiency and coordination between the UN system’s statistical programmes, in particular to meet the data demands of the 2030 Agenda. The resolution calls for a number of specific actions lead by the Statistics Division of DESA, in its capacity as the Secretariat of our Statistical Commission, to ensure appropriate country oversight.

Secondly, the Commission adopted the 2020 comprehensive review of the SDG indicator framework, as mandated by the original General Assembly resolution on the SDGs. This indicator review was led by countries and carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators. A limited number of major and minor refinements were agreed. The revised global indicator framework continues to be the foundation upon which the global statistical community can assess progress towards sustainable development.

Distinguished delegates,

You will also find in the Commission’s report our technical decisions on our regular work programme in fields such as the future of economic statistics, demographic statistics, refugee statistics, and governance statistics, to name only a few. We also started important new discussions on innovative topics such as geospatial information, open data, the global platform on big data and data stewardship. These themes are all the more critical in the current COVID19 crisis situation, when quick and yet reliable data from different types of sources need to be used effectively to take important crisis mitigation and policy decisions. I am

pleased to assure you that under the leadership of the United Nations, statistical offices from around the world have worked closely together in the past weeks, to share data and experiences in this difficult exceptional situation.

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present the Statistical Commission's report and decisions to you and look forward to your continued and strong support in the Commission's work.

Thank you.
