

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Committee on Statistics

Seventh session

Bangkok, 26–28 August 2020

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Seminar on priority issues: transforming human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future**Regional and national efforts to transform human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The purpose of the present document is to share a selection of national, regional and global efforts on human resource management and skills development. The aim is to share knowledge and identify priority actions for member States, United Nations entities and development partners to transform human resource management and skill development efforts to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future.

The Committee on Statistics may wish to provide advice on how regional cooperation may support and strengthen national efforts and priorities for global collaboration and cooperation.

I. Introduction

1. Asia and the Pacific has two overarching commitments for advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action,¹ endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its fifth session in 2016, and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind,² endorsed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at its seventy-fifth session in 2019.

2. Broadly speaking, the collective vision and framework for action focuses on strengthening statistical capacity to produce and disseminate official statistics, whereas the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind focuses on strengthening statistical capacity to lead a national statistical system.

* ESCAP/CST/2020/L.1.

¹ See E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/Rev.1.

² ESCAP/75/4/Add.1.

3. The Bureau of the Committee has identified human resource development and skills building for strengthening national statistical systems in Asia and the Pacific as a priority area for discussion in the region. Human resources and skills are important elements of both regional strategies.

4. Action area E of the collective vision and framework for action is to have the requisite skills set. Action area E recognizes that transforming institutions is transforming people and articulates two objectives: statistical requirements for the 2030 Agenda are supported by appropriate guidance material and training (objective 1) and the combined skills set of the staff of national statistical systems, together with capable management and sufficiency of human resources, enable the continuous generation of statistical products and services required for the monitoring of national development plans and the 2030 Agenda (objective 2).

5. The Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind commits to national action in nine areas, including empowering heads of national statistical organizations to lead the national statistical systems, statistical advocacy and awareness raising, and communication and statistical literacy. Skills and human resource attributes go beyond the traditional technical areas of official statistics.

6. The present document presents a selection of national, regional and global human resource management and skill development efforts. The aim is to guide discussions towards our shared Asia-Pacific vision for national statistical systems to be enabled and empowered to lead development of and to deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services for urgently needed and evolving statistical requirements of the 2030 Agenda. The document guides this discussion through three key questions: What human resource management actions are needed to achieve our collective vision? What human resource and skill development efforts are needed to achieve our collective vision? What training institutes are needed to support the member States to achieve the collective vision?

II. What human resource management actions are needed to achieve our collective vision?

7. In this section, global and regional human resource management initiatives are presented to guide a discussion on possible priorities for further action.

A. Global initiatives

1. Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems

8. The *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* guides chief statisticians and senior managers of statistical organizations in developing and maintaining statistical capacity that is fit for purpose. First released in 1954, the *Handbook* is currently being updated and the proposed chapter XII focuses on human resources management and development and addresses six key strategic questions:

- (a) What skills are needed now and in the future?
- (b) What can statistical offices offer for staff?
- (c) How to attract staff with those skills?

- (d) How to communicate about job opportunities in statistics?
- (e) How to train staff to maintain and develop their skills?
- (f) How to provide the best possible working environment?

9. Chapter XII will also reflect changes in staff hiring, retention and training to cover the evolution of information technology, new data sources, standards of modernization and business architecture.

10. Updating is being overseen by an advisory group including Mongolia, the Philippines and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Open Data Watch, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, and the five regional commissions of the United Nations, including ESCAP.

11. The updated version of the *Handbook* will be a living document available on the Internet by the end of 2020. This will allow a procedure to be put in place for regular updates of the document. A standing advisory group is expected to be created to facilitate that process by identifying and collecting new practices, innovative solutions and emerging regional and global initiatives. The group is expected to update the “live” *Handbook* every six months and a report containing a summary of the significant changes to the *Handbook* would be presented every second year to the Statistical Commission.

12. At its forty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission stressed the importance of making more chapters of the *Handbook* available in the official languages of the United Nations and in other languages. This is still being explored.

2. Thematic conferences

13. To complement the updated *Handbook*, a series of regional thematic conferences are being organized. To date, thematic conferences for Africa, the Caribbean and Asia have been held.

14. The Asia thematic conference brought together 18 national statistical offices from across Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Fiji, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam) and was hosted by ADB in Manila.

15. During the discussions on chapter XII of the *Handbook*, the following points were identified as significant to the region and proposed for inclusion in the appropriate chapters:

- (a) Public awareness campaigns – comprising comprehensive coverage (from the general public to the members of parliament/politicians);
- (b) Heightened focus on the condition of developing and underdeveloped countries;
- (c) Public – Private Partnerships for the development of statistical system in the changed data environment.

16. Before the *Handbook* is fully finalized, it is expected that all thematic conferences will be completed to allow good practices and initiatives from across all regions to be incorporated.

17. A thematic conference for the Pacific was scheduled for 2020 before the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and re-scheduling discussions are under way. A thematic conference for South-East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia was initially planned to be held from 27 to 29 April 2020 in Uzbekistan but has been postponed to late 2020 owing to COVID-19.

B. Regional initiatives

18. The Asia-Pacific region is very large and heterogeneous. The range of management, institutional governance, and legal and operating arrangements is equally diverse. Some statistical institutions report directly to the prime minister, others report to ministers. Some institutions are departments, some are autonomous entities. Many institutions are structured around traditional models of economic, social, population and environmental pillars, while others are more functionally organized. Some chief statisticians have a diversity of roles including chief data steward and national registrar and may also be the person responsible for the roll-out of national identification systems. Some institutions are responsible for national statistics but not responsible for subnational statistical operations. In the Pacific subregion alone, the total number of staff ranges from as small as four in Niue and Tuvalu to the largest office of 146 staff in Fiji.

19. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat maintains country profiles on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics web page. The country profiles contain valuable qualitative information on national statistical systems, such as references to national statistical laws and background information on the structure, mandate and outputs of national statistical systems.

20. The Friends of the Chair group on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics noted, in their report to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session, that the country profiles database is almost 10 years old and needs to be reviewed with a view to ensuring consistency and avoiding duplication with other platforms, such as the statistical capacity monitoring website³ of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. The Statistics Division plans to administer questionnaires for updating the country profiles database in collaboration with the Partnership every two to three years, beginning in 2020.

21. The World Bank is also planning to introduce country statistical profiles from 2021 as a supplementary section to its new statistical performance index. The profiles will provide actual information about institutional issues such as legislation, registers and coordination mechanisms.

22. A regional overview of national statistical systems in Asia and the Pacific will be considered following the update of the country profiles by the Statistics Division and the release of country statistical profiles by the World Bank. This will provide valuable qualitative information on how many

³ <https://statisticalcapacitymonitor.org/>.

countries in Asia and the Pacific operate under statistical laws, the various structures of national statistical systems in the region and mandates.

23. The *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* also devotes a chapter to key features of a national statistical office, including structures, governance and leadership, and statistical business architecture.⁴

24. In terms of structures, an in-depth review of process-oriented approach to statistical production (ECE/CES/BUR/2015/FEB/2) by the Economic Commission for Europe classifies organizational structures of national statistical offices into three most common basic types of organization:

(a) Divisional structure: a division is a collection of functions that produce a specific product. The divisional structure or product structure consists of self-contained divisions. This type of structure is closer to stovepipe structuring, where units are based on statistical domains, responsible for production of a certain product;

(b) Functional structure: in functional organizations, units are based on functions. In case of national statistical offices, these functions could be specified as data collection, processing and dissemination;

(c) Matrix structure: this type of structure is a mix of functional and divisional organizational structure, with dual reporting lines.

25. Three examples of structures of national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific are presented in annex I to highlight the diversity in the region.

III. What statistical human resource and skill development actions are needed to achieve our collective vision?

26. The Asia-Pacific statistical community has access to many human resource and skill development opportunities. The issue is not necessarily of quality and quantity, but of transparency and choice. How can countries find out about the full range of human resource and skill development opportunities? And which opportunity should you embrace?

27. This section presents a selection of human resource and skill development opportunities available at the global, regional and national levels, including country-led support for the Asia-Pacific region.

A. Global initiatives

28. Within the United Nations development system, there are many thematic areas such as prices, economic statistics, demographic statistics and big data. Within each of these thematic areas, many United Nations entities and development partners operate.

29. The Bureau of the Statistical Commission identified 46 groups serviced by the Statistics Division under the auspices of the Statistical Commission and an analysis by ESCAP shows eleven of these groups have training and development as part of their terms of reference. Four of these eleven groups

⁴ <https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/HSO/Chapter+V+-+National+Statistical+Office#ChapterVNationalStatisticalOffice-5.3Nationalstatisticalofficeasanorganization>.

are in the environmental domain. Annex II contains details of the groups as presented to the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission in March 2020.

30. The 2030 Agenda has seen the establishment of a network of global data custodians that have been strengthening national statistical capacity, such as through training and development, as part of their mandates. An analysis by the Economic Commission for Europe of the system of global data custodians for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators identified 50 custodian agencies, for example ILO, FAO and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).⁵

B. Regional initiatives from the United Nations development system

31. The Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific has training and skills development as one of its key objectives. The Programme has delivered training-of-trainer programmes for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives and Cambodia. The training material developed during the programme is shared on the website of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.⁶ The Programme has also hosted the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week, which annually brings together over 100 young and mid-career statisticians in a professional conference environment to prepare and present papers to peer groups.

32. The Statistical Institute of Asia and the Pacific is solely focused on training and development. Celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2020, the Institute is widely recognized for its statistical training programmes and its present focus includes training on methodology for the compilation of indicators for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. The Institute delivers statistical training through face-to-face, e-learning and blended programmes. The length of face-to-face and blended programmes ranges from 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 months in case of long-term training programmes and two to five days for short-term training programmes. These training programmes cover various technical subjects in social, economic, agricultural and environment statistics. Programmes of the Institute are focused on principles and practices of official statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, advanced statistical methods including small-area statistics to develop disaggregated Sustainable Development Goal indicators to address the requirement to leave no one behind, tools and methods for use of big data for official statistics and data visualization.

34. In addition to training on technical aspects in the context of the 2030 Agenda, the Institute also delivers training on issues relating to management of national statistical systems through leadership programmes for heads of national statistical offices, training on the development of national strategies for the development of statistics and on quality of official statistics for the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals.

35. The Institute also holds regular biennial seminars for chief statisticians of the region focusing on challenging institutional issues. In 2019, these seminars covered issues relating to the future of economic statistics and utilization of information and communications technology for official

⁵ ECE/CES/2018/39.

⁶ www.unsiap.or.jp/tot/index.html.

statistics. It has now been decided that the Institute will organize a management seminar every year.

36. The Institute has been delivering an average of 22 programmes each year over the past five years and has been training an average of 1,200 participants every year. In 2019, the Institute provided training to 1,258 participants through three long-term courses, twelve short-term courses and four e-learning courses.

37. The Institute has developed its 2020–2024 strategic plan with a focus on monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals through global and national indicators for supporting decision-making and policymaking to achieve the Goals. Adopted for the next five years, the plan lists two broad strategic directions: (a) better targeting to improve course effectiveness and (b) having a greater multiplier effect through the mobilization of highly specialized expertise and development of partnerships.

38. According to the plan, which was endorsed by the Governing Council of the Institute in 2019, the Institute will change the mix of its activities for better delivery of its training programmes and will improve its subregional footprint. It will make its e-learning effective and will track the methodology of indicators that have not been tiered so far.

39. The Institute shall be expanding its collaboration with custodian agencies of Sustainable Development Goal indicators, including United Nations organizations, for further development of training material and delivery of training on data collection and compilation of indicators for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals; training on the use of big data for official statistics, enhancing its networking with national statistical offices on statistical training issues to address country-specific needs, especially for countries with special needs; and capacity-building on management-related issues for mid- and higher-level staff in national statistical systems, focusing specifically on capacity-building of staff members of national statistical training institutions.

40. The Institute has placed a very high emphasis on the delivery of e-learning programmes over the past three years to increase the reach of its training programmes. Its e-learning programmes have been very successful and more than 500 participants have enrolled in them. These programmes have proved very effective during the COVID-19 pandemic when it was not possible for the Institute to conduct any face-to-face training programmes.

41. The Institute is in the process of developing a comprehensive user-friendly web-based learning management system that will deliver facilitated e-learning and self-paced e-learning programmes. This will also provide information on webinars and share material of face-to-face training programmes with the participants for long-term training courses, so participants can refer to the material later to apply in their work. This learning management system shall include a discussion forum for participants and a facility for the course facilitator to provide guidance for each facilitated e-learning course.

C. Regional initiatives from member States

42. Many member States support human resource and skills development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Governments of Australia, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom.

43. The Government of Japan provides extensive support to Asia and the Pacific, and globally, through the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. In 2019, the Government provided \$2.4 million for technical cooperation.⁷ Japan has been supporting the longest-running research institute of ESCAP in Asia and the Pacific, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, and 2020 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute.

44. The Government of Australia supports many human resource and skill development initiatives in the region. One such initiative is the annual Pacific leadership forum, which provides an opportunity for national statistical office leaders in the region to share information, discuss common challenges and explore opportunities for collaboration. Eight leadership forums have been held since 2011, covering topics ranging from the concept of public value, creating an effective authorizing environment, adaptive leadership, statistical communication in the modern data landscape, building stakeholder engagement, and bridging the gaps between data relevance/production and policy needs. While the forum has a focus on strengthening statistical leadership capability for national statistical office heads and senior staff to lead national statistical systems in Pacific island countries, the forum also strengthens links between key development partners throughout the Pacific region, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Statistics New Zealand, national statistical offices of Pacific island countries and the Pacific Community. The forum is financially supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia.

45. The Government of the United Kingdom, through its Department for International Development, has supported the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific since 2016 (see details in section III, B).

46. The Government of the Russian Federation has invested in an extensive programme of training support to Central Asian countries through a specific Sustainable Development Goal indicator training programme. ESCAP is collaborating with the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation and the Higher School of Economics of the National Research University in Moscow on the development and delivery of face-to-face and distance training programmes in the Russian language to meet the needs of Central Asian countries.

47. Many countries in the region have contributed to international capacity-building. The State Statistical Committee, Azerbaijan; National Bureau of Statistics, China; National Statistical Systems Training Academy, India; BPS-Statistics, Indonesia; Statistical Centre of Iran, Islamic Republic of Iran; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan; Department of Statistics, Malaysia; and Statistics Korea, Republic of Korea organized training for other countries in collaboration with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific between 2015 and 2019.

48. Countries also provided bilateral assistance. For example, the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, trained statisticians of the National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives, and the Maldives National University.⁸ The National Bureau of Statistics, China, has held training courses on population census for

⁷ See ESCAP/76/27.

⁸ <https://cmb.ac.lk/university-of-colombo-to-train-statisticians-of-national-bureau-of-statistics-maldives-and-maldivian-national-university-under-unfpa-funding>.

the National Institute of Statistics of Cambodia. The Government of India has been providing ten-month training programmes on statistics theory and application to participants from developing countries in the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme.

D. Country initiatives

49. A 2017 capacity assessment undertaken as part of the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific found more than 75 per cent of countries with a population size of 100,000 or more have a dedicated training unit within the national statistical system, with larger countries being more likely to have one. Only 29 per cent of countries with a population size of less than 100,000, referred to as “micro” in the table, have a dedicated training unit within their statistical systems.

50. The regional average for availability of induction programmes and of specific training on economic statistics for staff of national statistical offices are 78 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively. Staff working elsewhere in the national statistical systems are provided with similar opportunities for training in 62 per cent and 58 per cent of the countries that responded.

51. It is interesting to note the substantial difference between the availability of economic statistics training (86 per cent) for national statistical office staff and the existence of dedicated training units (29 per cent) in micro countries. As an explanation, respondents noted that internationally provided training successfully closes this gap. The following organizations were mentioned as training providers in the responses: ADB, Australian Bureau of Statistics, ESCAP/Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, International Monetary Fund, Statistics New Zealand, Pacific Community and Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre.

Status of statistical training by population size grouping, 2017
(n=50)

| | <i>Micro</i> | <i>Small</i> | <i>Medium</i> | <i>Large</i> | <i>Regional Average</i> |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>(less than 100,000)</i> | <i>(100,000-1 million)</i> | <i>(1-30 million)</i> | <i>(more than 30 million)</i> | |
| Number of countries | 7 | 10 | 17 | 16 | |
| <i>Percentage of countries answering yes</i> | | | | | |
| There is a dedicated unit within the national statistical system overseeing staff training in general | 29 | 60 | 71 | 88 | 68 |
| Induction programmes on statistics are organized for statistical staff working on economic statistics in the national statistical office | 71 | 50 | 76 | 100 | 78 |
| Induction programmes on statistics are organized for statistical staff working on economic statistics in other agencies | 29 | 50 | 53 | 94 | 62 |
| Specific training on economic statistics is provided to statistical staff working in the national statistical office | 86 | 80 | 76 | 100 | 86 |
| Specific training on economic is provided to statistical staff working on economic statistics in other agencies | 29 | 60 | 53 | 75 | 58 |

Source: ESCAP, Statistics Division, “Report on the capacity screening of economic statistics in Asia and the Pacific 2017”, October 2018. Available at http://communities.unescap.org/system/files/capacity_screening_2017_-_final_rev.pdf.

IV. What training institutions are needed to support member States in achieving the collective vision?

52. There are multiple training institutions in Asia and the Pacific. This section provides a brief overview of activities relevant to training institutions and institutions delivering training and development activities.

A. Global initiatives

53. The Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training⁹ fosters training in official statistics. There are currently 25 members of the Network, comprising 19 regional and international training institutes and 6 countries whose national statistical offices have statistical training centres that provide training beyond their national borders. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, the Pacific Community and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries are the three Asia-Pacific-

⁹ <https://unstats.un.org/GIST>.

based institutional members. China and the Republic of Korea are the two Asia-Pacific-based country members.¹⁰

54. The Network is guided by an advisory group of which Japan and the Philippines are members.

55. The former president of the International Statistical Institute, Ms. Helen MacGillivray of Australia, is the Chair of the Network.

56. The Network has established three task teams addressing (a) specific national statistical office demands to meet data needs for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) an e-learning community of practice and an online gateway for training courses; and (c) statistical literacy in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

57. The task team on addressing specific national statistical office demands to meet data needs for the Sustainable Development Goals is looking at how the members of the Network can better meet national statistical office needs collectively. It has used available studies and input from national statistical offices to understand the needs and is in the process of developing case studies to showcase challenges encountered in the coordination of statistical training. This is linked to the understanding that some areas have many actors and potential duplication of support, for instance, in gender or labour statistics, and an increase in coordinated efforts would be beneficial. At the same time, for other areas, national statistical offices have specified that more support is needed but insufficient support is provided, typically in areas linked to statistical organization and management. Bringing together partners to fill the gaps could be useful. The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries has actively contributed to the work of this task team.

58. The task team on an e-learning community of practice and an online gateway has established a landing page or hub for statistical training courses on the platform called “UN SDG:Learn” with a subdomain particularly dedicated to statistics.¹¹ The landing page gives an overview of available e-learning and face-to-face courses in statistics and provides links to the pages of the different agencies that offer the courses. The idea is to make it easier for those looking for statistics courses by showcasing all in one place, a one-stop-shop for statistics courses. Agencies are responsible for uploading course information and only courses that the various providers decide to upload are shown. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs guides contributors on what may be uploaded in the different categories of learning courses and undertakes quality assessment at the general level. The statistics landing page was launched at the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission.

59. To date, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific has linked five of its courses to UN SDG:Learn.

60. The task team on statistical literacy discusses approaches for improving literacy among user groups and some members are in the process of developing e-learning courses on statistical literacy using inputs from other task team

¹⁰ A training institute does not have to be a member of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training to provide training beyond their national borders. Malaysia and Sri Lanka, for instance, provide training beyond their national borders and are not members of the Network.

¹¹ www.unsdglearn.org/statistics/.

members. A webinar, held in September 2019 as part of the United Nations World Data Forum webinar series, was well attended and more webinars or similar outreach activities may be conducted. The task team is also collecting examples of statistical literacy materials, with the aim of creating an overview of resources available.

61. Members of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training met in New York on the sidelines of the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission in March 2020 to share experiences across task teams and discuss the way forward. It was agreed to continue working along the same lines. It was also agreed to involve the advisory group more, for instance for case studies or follow-up related to discussions in the task teams.

B. Regional initiatives

62. The Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific¹² was established in 2013 by the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics with a mandate to facilitate information-sharing and coordination among statistical training institutes in the region. The Network is supported by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific as its secretariat and meets yearly. There are 26 members of the Network, comprising 13 international organizations and 13 countries whose national statistical offices have statistical training centres that provide training to participants from other countries.

63. The Network has established three subgroups on (a) gender statistics, (b) economic statistics and (c) agricultural and rural statistics.

64. The subgroup on gender statistics is led by UN-Women Asia and the Pacific, which provides considerable support to training activities in the region, particularly in communicating and disseminating gender statistics. A small group on accreditation and standardization of training will be formed within the gender statistics subgroup to continue the discussions on developing the accreditation of official statistics courses. The progress made through these discussions will be shared with the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, which is also considering the issue at the global level.

65. The subgroup on economic statistics is led by the ESCAP Statistics Division in close collaboration with the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The subgroup focuses on strengthening national capacity for designing and delivering training on foundational economic statistics to lessen the dependency of national statistical offices, central banks and ministries of finance on international training for entry-level statisticians. A training package for teachers comprising curriculum, training plans, theory and exercises has been tested by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives and Nepal, reviewed by the Steering Group and Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific members and is now available as a free regional resource. At the 2019 meeting of the Network, suggestions for future work by the subgroup included newly emerging economic frameworks (such as digital economy, maritime gross domestic product, green economy, creative gross domestic product, gross domestic knowledge product), big data, and a possible expansion of the training package to include environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting.

¹² www.unsiap.or.jp/tnetwork/index.html.

66. The subgroup on agricultural and rural statistics is led by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The subgroup designed an assessment of common training needs for agricultural and rural statistics.

67. In addition to supporting subgroups, the secretariat of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific has developed a database of training information to coordinate trainings and to avoid duplication of efforts. The database is in the early stages of development. Future consideration may be given to link the database through to UN SDG:Learn.

68. At its most recent meeting in December 2019, member States encouraged the Network and its three subgroups to consider providing statistical training for higher- and managerial-level staff. This included gender statistics training as well as new areas such as trust in official statistics. Translation of training materials into local languages was also encouraged.

C. Country initiatives

69. Many countries are members of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific and partner with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific to deliver training programmes. For instance, the Government of Malaysia partners with the Institute for training courses on statistical business registers and the Government of the Republic of Korea partners with the Institute for training courses on big data for sustainable development, on education-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and on monitoring the Goals from a gender perspective. The Institute also partners with countries to provide country-specific courses.

70. The Russian Federation is exploring the development of an international resource centre to support building capacity to produce and use official statistics, especially in the Central Asian region where the reach of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific is limited. The training programme on Sustainable Development Goal indicators mentioned earlier will contribute to a growing resource base for the international resource centre.

V. Opportunities for regional action

A. Human resources

71. The global *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* is an important resource for ensuring that statistical capacity is fit for purpose. Countries of Asia and the Pacific are contributing to the revisions of the *Handbook* through discussions at the regional thematic conferences and through the only national statistical office from Asia and the Pacific which is a member of the advisory group. Member States are encouraged to become members of the advisory group and contribute to updating the living document, as a knowledge source for human resource managers.

72. Member States are also invited to discuss what priority should be given to documenting and sharing knowledge of operating arrangements in Asia and the Pacific following the updating of country profiles by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the release of country statistical profiles by the World Bank.

B. Skills development

73. All in all, there is no shortage of skill development opportunities available to member States in Asia and the Pacific. Training programmes have been available for 50 years through the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the substantial financial support of Japan, leadership forums have been held for Pacific island countries since 2011 with the financial support of Australia, training development programmes in economic statistics have been available since 2016 with financial support of the United Kingdom and training in Russian language has been available since 2019 with financial support of the Russian Federation. Many other countries offer in-kind support such as attendance at national training programmes or South-South cooperation in the case of Maldives and Sri Lanka.

74. The challenge, if it is a challenge, is to navigate the plethora of choices and choose the option most relevant to needs and circumstances. Member States may wish to share their expectations from training and other skill development opportunities available to them globally and regionally. Is it challenging to get an overview of options available? Are there unmet training needs? Are there preferred training modalities?

75. On the first question, the Secretary-General's reforms of the United Nations development system may offer a response. The reforms include a region-by-region change management programme to strengthen cooperation in data and statistics and reduce duplication. In the Asia-Pacific region, development partners have commenced by mapping out planned development activities for 2020. This mapping was undertaken before the onset of COVID-19 and identified over 300 activities planned for 2020. These activities included training programmes, workshops, expert group meetings and other events such as launches of reports involving regional and other development partners operating in the Asia-Pacific region. The next step is for development partners to continue to map activities, identify duplication and areas for collaboration. One outcome will be the sharing with member States of an annual calendar of planned activities starting in 2021.

76. On the second and third question, countries wishing to contribute to national capacity, like the contributions from Australia, Japan, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom, may wish to learn from these contributors and replicate existing efforts. For example, the leadership forums may also be beneficial to other regions such as South Asia or South-East Asia.

C. Building the capacity of training institutions

77. Member States looking to build institutional capability have at least two options available: the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training; and the regional Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific. Both are developing online training databases and platforms. Member States are encouraged to join the regional and global initiatives to ensure Asia and the Pacific needs are considered.

78. The Network was established by the ESCAP Committee of Statistics in 2013, well before the Global Network was established. Member States may wish to share their expectations of the Network, contributions they wish to make to the Network, and their experiences in relation to the Global Network.

VI. Issues for consideration by the Committee

79. The Committee may wish to provide advice on how regional cooperation may support and strengthen national efforts and priorities for global collaboration and cooperation.

80. The Committee may also wish to consider and express its view on each of the opportunities for regional action to support national, regional and global efforts, as outlined in section V.

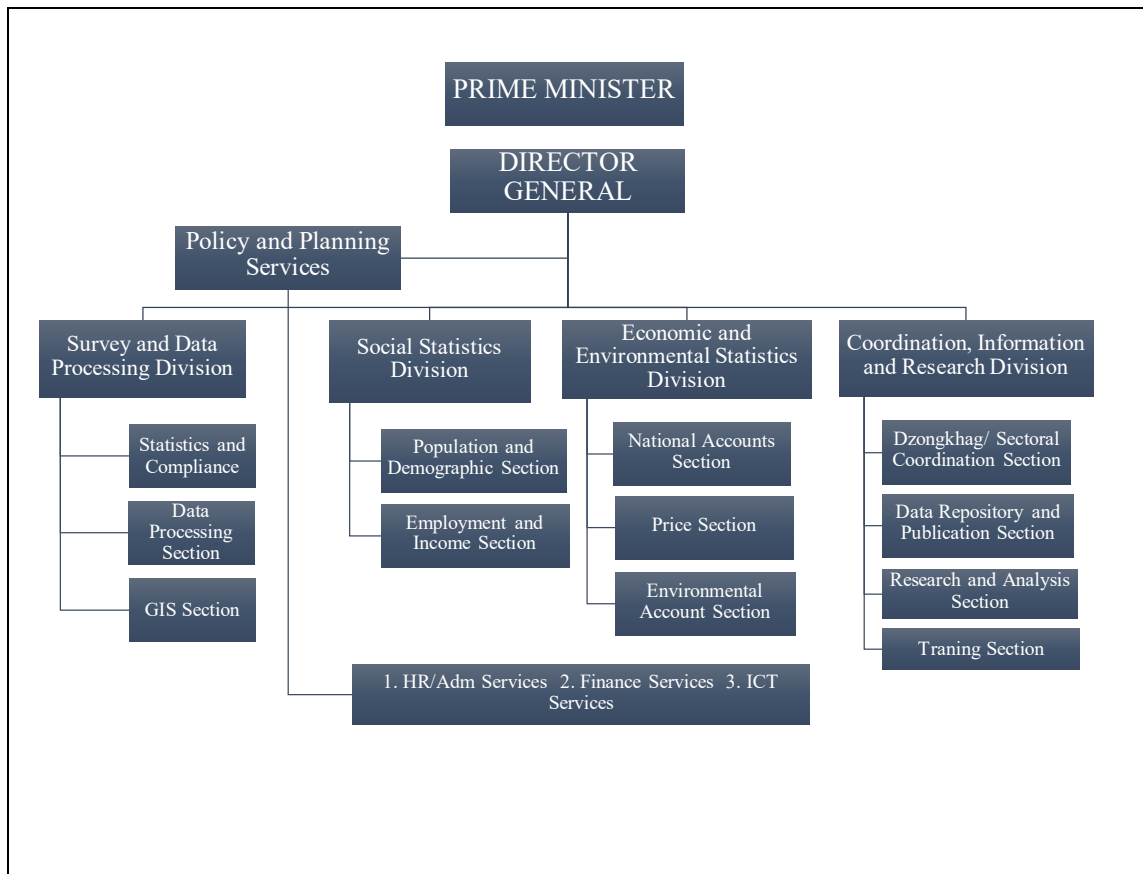
Annex I

Selected organization charts from the Asia-Pacific region

Example 1. Divisional structure

1. The Bhutan Statistical Office reports to the Prime Minister and has four substantive divisions: survey and data processing; social statistics; economic and environment statistics; and coordination, information and research. The four service areas report to the Director General.

Figure I
Bhutan Statistical Office organization chart



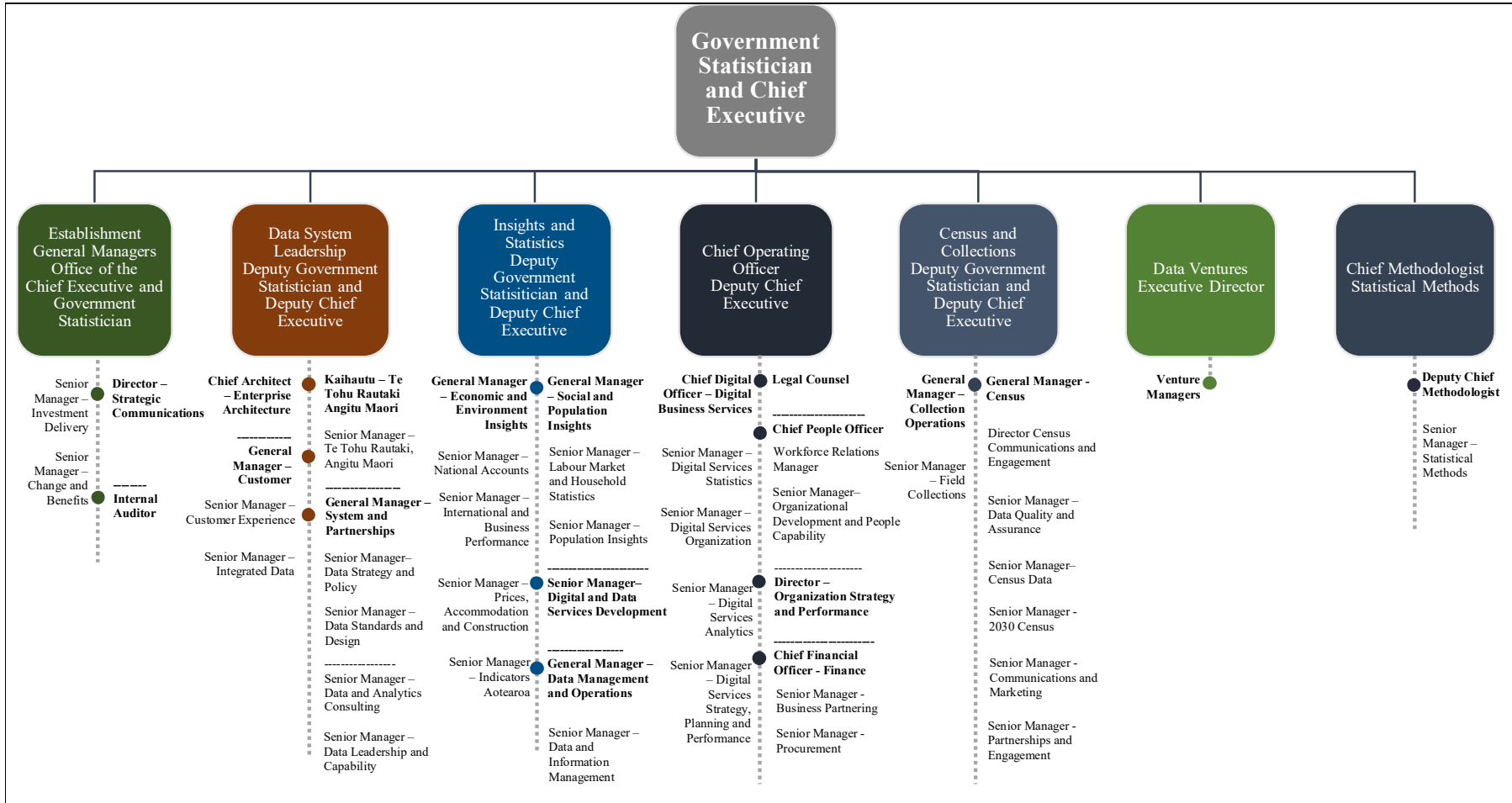
Source: www.nsb.gov.bt/main/pageContent.php?id=3.

Abbreviations: Adm, Administrative; GIS, Geographic Information System; HR, human resource; ICT, information and communications technology.

Example 2. Functional structure

2. Statistics New Zealand is headed by a Government Statistician and Chief Executive Officer. The Government Statistician is also the chief data steward of New Zealand. Reporting to the Government Statistician and Chief Executive Officer are five functional leads (Establishment General Managers, Data System Leadership, Insights and Statistics, Chief Operating Officer), a Chief Methodologist and a Data Ventures Executive Director.

Figure II
 Statistics New Zealand organization chart

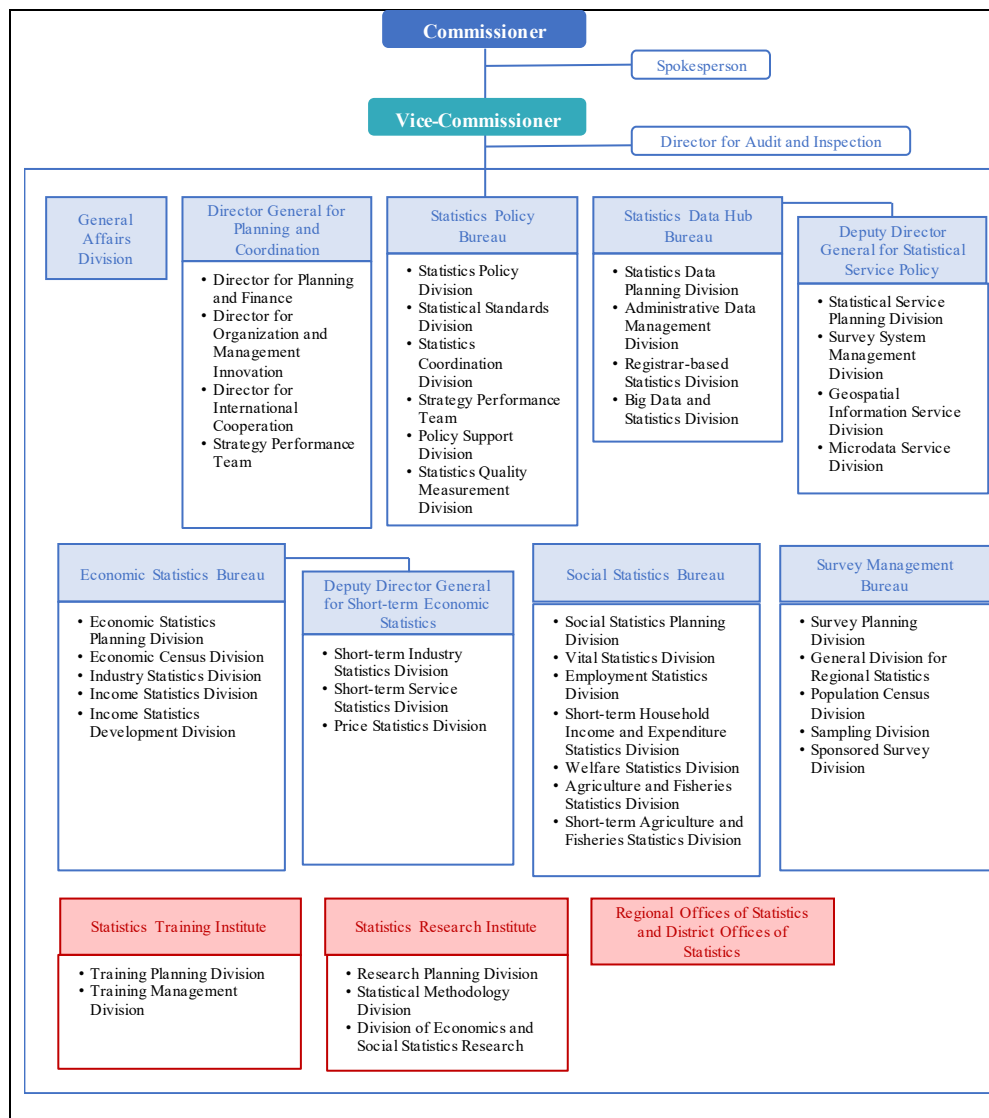


Source: www.stats.govt.nz/about-us/our-organisation.

Example 3. Matrix structure

3. Statistics Korea or KOSTAT is under the Ministry of Strategy and Finance. It has one Director General, five bureaus (Economic Statistics, Social Statistics, Statistics Data, Statistics Policy, Survey Management), one deputy director general, four officers, 34 divisions, and one team working in the headquarters. Statistics Korea also operates affiliated agencies including the Statistical Training Institute, the Statistical Research Institute, regional offices of statistics and district offices of statistics.

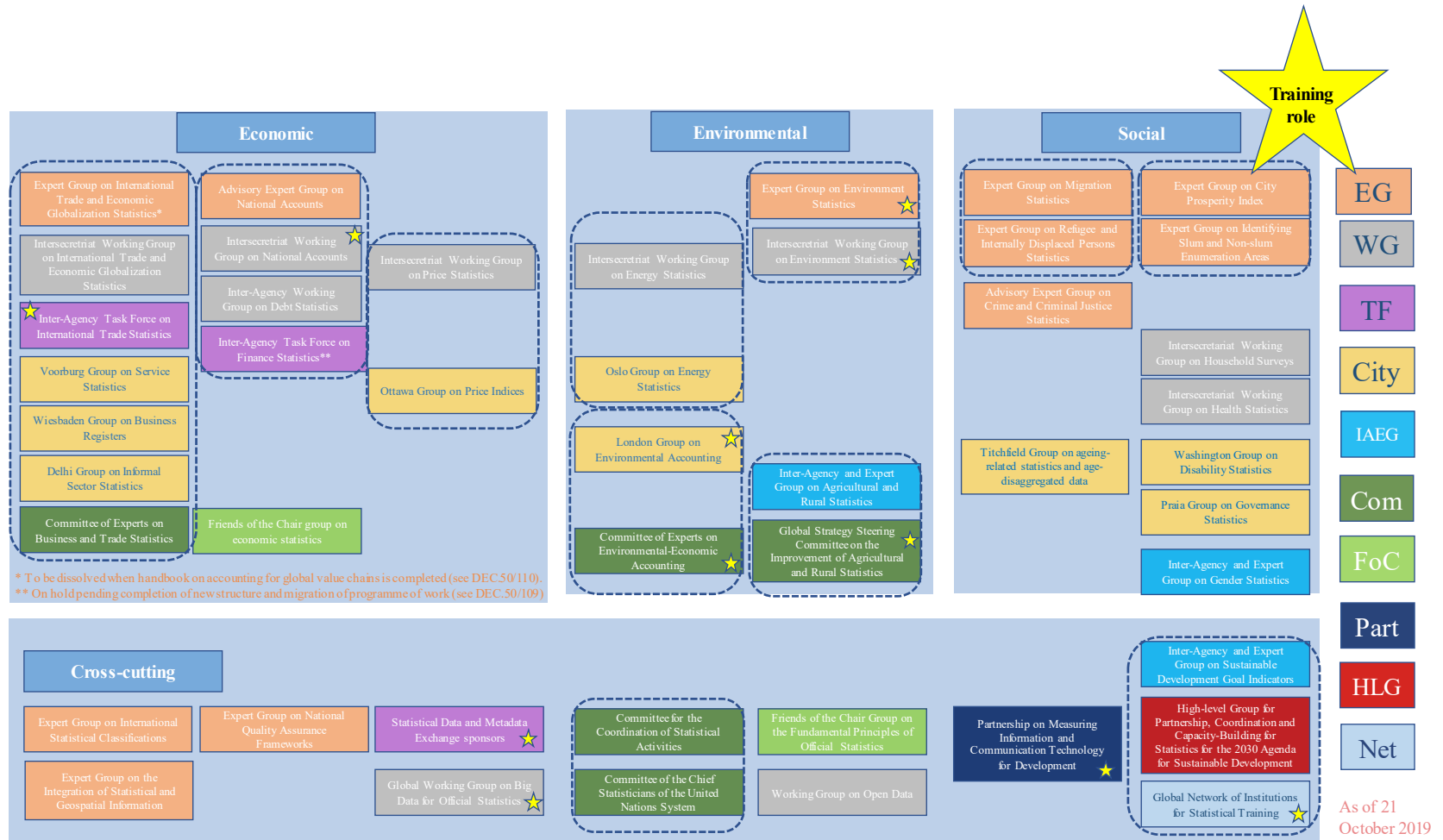
Figure III
Statistics Korea organization chart



Source: <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/aboutUs/3/1/index.static>.

Annex II

Groups under the Statistical Commission by pillar and type of group



Source: E/CN.3/2020/27, annex I, modified by ESCAP.

Abbreviations: City, city group; Com, committee; EG, expert group; FoC, Friends of the Chair; HLG, high-level group; IAEG, inter-agency expert group; Net, network; Part, partnership; TF, task force; WG, working group.