Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Statistics

Sixth session
Bangkok, 16–19 October 2018
Items 7 and 11 of the provisional agenda*

**Consideration of the draft declaration on navigating
policy with data to leave no one behind**

**Member States' perspectives on navigating policy with
data to leave no one behind**

Navigating policy with data to leave no one behind: whole-of-government support for national statistical systems

Note by the secretariat

Summary

"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" sets a high-level ambition, and Governments have committed to systematically monitor, follow up and review its implementation to provide accountability to their citizens. Governments stress the significant role of relevant, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data as a means of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Deficiencies in producing high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data were recognized by Member States at the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development and Member States also acknowledged that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda would require substantial and sustained commitment and cooperation by all relevant stakeholders.

The high-level segment of the Committee is a united gathering of policymakers, other high-level users of statistics and producers of statistics to consider the adoption of a far-reaching declaration to empower the Asia-Pacific statistical community to successfully contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The segment will comprise country statements and the sharing of commitments and actions respective Governments have taken, or will be taking, to support their national systems in implementing the Agenda 2030.

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* ESCAP/CST/2018/L.1/Rev.1.

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1.   "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"[1] sets a high-level ambition for progress on a broad scope of development issues. The 2030 Agenda recognizes poverty as the greatest global challenge, and lists promotion of inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment and enhancing social inclusion as central to its implementation.

2.   Governments have committed to systematically monitor, follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to provide accountability to their citizens. The 2030 Agenda encourages Member States to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress through country-led and country-driven efforts, to serve as a basis for reviews by the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

3.   As a means of facilitating the implementation, Governments have stressed the significant role of relevant, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data. Recognizing underlying methodological and capacity gaps in their statistical systems, they have also committed to addressing systemic issues on data, monitoring and accountability, as reflected in targets 17.18 and 17.19 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4.   Demands on national statistical systems have multiplied, necessitating an urgent intensification of whole-of-government support. In Asia and the Pacific, only 25 per cent of the official Sustainable Development Goal indicators can currently be used to assess progress at the regional level. The dearth of data is most noticeable for development issues that have been added since the Millennium Development Goals, such as those concerning the environment.[2]

5.   Strengthening the role of statistics and evidence-based policymaking to increase transparency, improve public service and Sustainable Development Goal delivery[3] was among the key challenges noted by countries conducting voluntary national reviews at the 2018 high-level political forum.[4] Statistical capacity remains a significant impediment in supporting effective policymaking and decision-making. Member States recognized deficiencies in producing high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data, and acknowledged that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda would require substantial and sustained commitment and cooperation by all relevant stakeholders.

6.   To respond to increasing demands, the Asia-Pacific statistical community pioneered the development of a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community. The vision was endorsed by the Committee at its fifth session[5] and reflected in the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and

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[1]   General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[2]   *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2017: Measuring SDG progress in Asia and the Pacific: Is there enough data?* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.II.F.1). Available at www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP-SYB2017.pdf.

[3]   Synthesis of Main Messages of 2018 National Voluntary Reviews.

[4]   The member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific that are conducting voluntary national reviews in 2018 are: Armenia; Australia; Bhutan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Singapore; Sri Lanka; and Viet Nam.

[5]   E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/Rev.1, endorsed by the Committee on Statistics in December 2016.

the Pacific.[6] Successful implementation of the vision and the road map is highly dependent upon adequate investment and other support being provided to national statistical offices.

7.   The statistical community relies on the engagement of Governments in this important vision.

8.   Therefore, a call for high-level support goes to the heart of the united gathering of policymakers, other high-level users of statistics and producers of statistics at the sixth session of the Committee. The high-level segment of the Committee will consider adoption of a far-reaching declaration to empower the Asia-Pacific statistical community to successfully contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through producing statistics in support of policymaking and decision-making. Adoption of the declaration entitled "Navigating policy with data to leave no one behind" will set in motion transformative processes to enable national statistical systems to produce high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated statistics to close data gaps for delivering on national and global development commitments.

9.   Participants of the high-level segment of the Committee are invited to deliver country statements and share commitments and actions respective Governments have taken and will be taking to support their national statistical systems in navigating policy with data to leave no one behind.

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[6] ESCAP resolution 73/9.