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

Fourth session

Bangkok, 25-27 March 2015

Item 7(b) of the provisional agenda*

Reports brought to the attention of the Committee:**Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific**

Report of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

Note by the Secretariat**

Summary

The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific held its tenth session on 11 and 12 December 2014 in Bangkok. The present report contains the main decisions and recommendations that the Governing Council will bring to the attention of the Commission at its seventy-first session. The Committee may wish to take note of the report.

I. Background

1. In accordance with the Statute¹ of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), the Governing Council reviews the administration and financial status of the Institute and the implementation of its programme of work and reviews and endorses annual and long-term work plans through annual sessions of the Council. The tenth session of the Council was held in Bangkok, on 11 and 12 December 2014.

2. The session was attended by representatives of the host Government (Japan) and seven of the eight elected members² of the Governing Council:

* E/ESCAP/CST(4)/L.1.

** The present report has been issued without formal editing.

¹ The Statute constitutes the basis of SIAP's legal existence and defines its mission and functions as decided by ESCAP Resolution 50/5 "Status of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific" and subsequent amendments and revisions. The Statute of the Institute was last revised in 2011 pursuant to resolution 67/13 of the Commission.

² In accordance with its Statute, the Institute has a Governing Council consisting of a representative designated by the Government of Japan and eight representatives nominated by other members and associate members of ESCAP elected by the Commission. The Commission, at its sixty-ninth session, elected the following countries as members of the Governing Council for a three-year term, 2013-2016: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Thailand.

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3. Representatives of the following members and associate members attended the session as observers: Bangladesh, Fiji, Hong Kong, China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

4. Representatives of the following organizations attended the session as observers: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Environmental Programme, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Statistics Division, Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).

5. The Governing Council elected by acclamation the representative of Australia, Ms Gemma Van Halderen, and of Japan, Mr Takao Itou, as chair and co-chair of the 10th session, respectively.

6. The final agenda adopted by the Council was, as follows:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising from the ninth session of the Governing Council and its interim session.
3. Report of the Director of the Institute.
4. Work and financial plan for 2015.
5. Consideration of matters relating to the Committee on Statistics:
 - (a) Report on the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (b) Report on the Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics: training component;
 - (c) Review of conference structure of ESCAP and reporting line of SIAP.
6. Other matters.
7. Dates and venue for the eleventh session of the Governing Council.
8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council.

II. Main Outcomes of the 10th Session

7. The outcomes of the Governing Council sessions are reported directly to the Commission at its annual sessions. The main recommendations and decisions of the 10th session, summarized below, will be brought to the attention of the Commission at its 71st session in May 2015.

Programme of work and training strategies

8. The Governing Council commended SIAP for its outstanding accomplishments and results in the reporting period and its progress in achieving its programme of work for 2014.

9. The Governing Council appreciated the results-based monitoring of the work programme of SIAP and the efforts made by SIAP in improving measurements of the impact of its training programmes. The Council recommended that these initiatives include measuring the long term impact of its work on statistical capacity in the region.

10. In reviewing the programmes and training strategies implemented by SIAP, the Council noted with satisfaction the expanded capacity to accommodate continuing demand for e-learning on the system of national accounts as a result of collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Council stressed the importance of the programme on modernizing national statistical systems and the relevance of its focus on innovative and responsive leadership and management of national statistical offices.

11. The Governing Council reiterated the importance of research-based training to build capacity of statistical offices to carry out applied methodological research to improve their statistical processes. The Council appreciated the use of blended learning as a cost-effective design for this training and advised SIAP to consider modalities such as engaging experts from advanced countries and international organizations to serve as research advisors as well as exploring the use of ICT-enabled modalities such as the use of Skype and WebEx.

12. The Council noted the strong interest of member States in participating in the SIAP-JICA residential courses. Considering the conditions that define the scope of countries that may avail of JICA fellowships that fund participation in the courses and noting that the course is open to all member States, the Council encouraged interested member States to seek alternative sources of funding to enable participation of their statistical staff in these training courses.

13. The Council advised SIAP to increasingly draw on and make best use of expertise from outside Asia and the Pacific, consistent with SIAP's role in coordinating statistical capacity development.

14. The Council highlighted the importance of consultation mechanisms for countries looking for support for capacity building, ranging from bilateral consultations to formal and informal support. The Council noted that the Committee on Statistics and the ESCAP Statistics Division have to key roles in facilitating and supporting these processes.

Financial status and resource mobilization

15. The Governing Council recognizes that the significant financial and in-kind contributions from the Government of Japan continue to be crucial to the capacity of SIAP to implement its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. The Council requested member countries and statistics development partners to continue to make financial and in-kind contributions to support statistical capacity development in the region through SIAP training.

16. To further expand the clientele base as a means of supplementing SIAP resources, the Governing Council recommended that SIAP should engage the ministries of finance, central banks, health, and education in its training programmes and seek guidance and assistance from the ESCAP secretariat in exploring opportunities for engaging the private sector.

Work and financial plan for 2015

17. The Council endorsed the programme of work and financial plan proposed by SIAP for 2015.

18. The Council emphasized the importance of continued capability building for producing and enhancing the quality of basic statistics in national statistical systems of developing countries. Considering that the SIAP-JICA residential training courses focus on these areas, the Council encouraged member States to give priority to these courses in the annual needs survey conducted by JICA. The Governing Council discussed the importance of providing training or support in the best use of ICT in modern statistical systems and encouraged SIAP to see where this would best fit in its programme of work.

19. Bearing in mind the discussions of the preparatory expert group meeting on *Statistics and data for the post-2015 development agenda: Implications for regional collaboration in Asia and the Pacific* that emphasized the expected increased demand for statistics in monitoring the development agenda beyond 2015, the Governing Council advised SIAP to include in its training activities topics related to, among other things, big data and environmental accounting and statistics. In the design of training in the area of big data, the Governing Council endorsed the proposed plan for Regional Technical Seminar on Challenges and Issues in the Use of Big Data for Production of Official Statistics and suggested that it provide concrete examples of how Big Data (including administrative data) can be utilized in producing statistics in selected areas — for example, transport statistics, trade statistics or price statistics. The Council urged member States who have experience in the focus area of the seminar to provide experts and share their results.

20. Recognizing the importance of the Management Seminar for the Heads of Statistical Offices as a forum for sharing challenges and deliberating on solutions and good practices in leading and managing statistical development, the Council recommended that SIAP engage expertise of Council members in organizing the seminar.

21. The Council appreciated the relevance of training on statistical quality management and suggested that SIAP considers topics on the quality of administrative data and the quality of data from satellite images, mobile phones, and scanner data in future courses.

22. The Council noted that the established cost-sharing arrangements between SIAP and the statistical training institutes of India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, results in efficient use of resources available for training in the region and urged other member States to collaborate with SIAP through this modality.

23. The Council encouraged SIAP to continue facilitating South-South cooperation in building statistical capacity, given the successful conduct of training provided to the Timor-Leste statistical system through South-South cooperation with Indonesia and the Philippines.

24. In recognizing that the demands for training in a wide range of topics in the region can only be effectively met through collaboration among training providers, the Council welcomed the expressions of strong interest by ADB, ILO, ITU, SESRIC and UNFPA in working with SIAP on delivering training in areas such as ICT household statistics, analysis of census and household survey data and the new recommendations on labour and employment statistics.

Network for Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific

25. The Council noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific with 22 member States and development partners as founding members and expressed appreciation to Australia for agreeing to Chair the Network.

26. The Council further noted the importance of the function of the Network in strengthening partnerships and improving coordination in statistical capacity building in the region and expressed support for the work programme of the Network. The Council appreciated the statement of support to SIAP of the government of Japan in carrying out its role as secretariat to the Network. The Council urged member States and statistics development partners to support the implementation of the work programme of the Network, including through the provision of resources.

Training Component of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (RAP-GS)

27. The Council expressed support for the proposed 2015 work plan of the training component of the RAP-GS and noted with appreciation the resources it provides for SIAP training and coordination activities. The Governing Council noted that effective collaboration among the implementing partners (ADB, FAO and ESCAP) of the RAP-GS is crucial in ensuring that the outputs needed for improving agricultural and rural statistics of countries in the region are achieved.

28. The Council further recognized that strong collaboration between SIAP and FAO strengthens the capacity of SIAP in supporting sustainable capacity development in agricultural and rural statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

Review of Conference Structure of ESCAP and Reporting Line of SIAP

29. Noting that the Commission through Resolution 69/1 has decided to review the conference structure of Commission and has requested the ESCAP Executive Secretary to submit to the Commission at its 71st session a report to include, among others, recommendations on reforming the governance structure of the regional institutions and their integration within the secretariat's work programme, the Council reiterated its recommendation contained in the Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its eighth session (E/ESCAP69/14) that strongly recommends that "the current arrangements for reporting to the Commission be retained and that additional layers should not be added". The Council also reiterated its view expressed in the abovementioned report that "the Council and the Committee on Statistics were already coordinating well, and that a change in the reporting line of the Governing Council could have the adverse effect of lowering the level in governments to which statistical training priorities were reported."

30. The Governing Council further noted that the third session of the Committee on Statistics, in reviewing the functioning of the Committee, stated that (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17): "The Committee recognized its important role in providing substantive direction to the work of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP). The current reporting arrangements, whereby the Governing Council of the Institute reports directly to the Commission, were considered the best modality for both the Committee and the Governing Council. The Committee recommended that the Commission maintain the current reporting arrangements regarding the Governing Council of SIAP."

Acknowledgements

31. The Governing Council acknowledged with deep appreciation the contributions and highest level of support to SIAP extended by the host Government, Japan, through cash and in-kind contributions made through its Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and JICA.

32. The Council also expressed appreciation to the following:

(a) Contributing members and associate members of ESCAP for their cash contributions to SIAP for 2014.

(b) Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations for the multiyear collaborative partnership under the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Implement the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (RAP-GS).

(c) The Statistical Training Institute of Statistics Korea, National Statistical Systems Training Academy of India, the ESCAP Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture, the Statistical Centre of Iran, the Department of Statistics Malaysia, BPS Statistics Indonesia and Russian Federal State Statistics Service for hosting regional and sub-regional courses on a cost-sharing basis.

(d) National experts who served as resource persons and guest lecturers for SIAP courses and their respective institutions: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and other ministries, prefectural governments, educational institutions and private companies in Japan; the Australian Statistics Bureau; BPS Statistics Indonesia and Philippines Statistical Research and Training Institute.

(e) Regional and international statistics development partners that collaborated with SIAP in conducting its courses: Asian Development Bank; Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations; International Monetary Fund, International Labour Organization; Secretary of the Pacific Community; the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century; United Nations Statistics Division; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; the University of the South Pacific; and the World Bank.
