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

Fourth session

Bangkok, 25-27 March 2015

Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

Strategic direction of the Committee on Statistics

**Notable decisions made by the Economic and Social
Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations
Statistical Commission**

Note by secretariat***Summary*

The present note contains a summary of the outcomes of the sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the forty-fourth, forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions of the Statistical Commission.

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

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

Outcomes of the most recent sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Statistical Commission

1. The present document presents for the information of the Committee a summary of outcomes of the sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the forty-fourth, forty-fifth, and forty-sixth sessions of the Statistical Commission.

A. Outcomes of the sixty-ninth session of ESCAP

2. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held its sixty-ninth session in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 April 2013 to 1 May 2013, with the theme of “Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises”¹

Adoption of resolutions in the field of statistics

3. The Commission adopted two resolutions related to statistics, namely resolution 69/15 on Implementing the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and 69/16 A core set of population and social statistics to guide national capacity development in Asia and the Pacific².

Appreciation of the role of statistics in development and the achievements of the Committee on Statistics, its Bureau, and the Secretariat

4. The Commission emphasized the critical importance of statistics in laying the foundation for effective public policy and planning that underpinned the provision of many essential services. Furthermore, the Commission stressed the importance of statistical capacity-building and the potential of strong regional cooperation and urged member States to give priority to statistics development.

5. The Commission, while having expressed its support for the report of the Committee on Statistics on its third session (E/ESCAP/69/13), emphasized the importance of effective implementation of its decisions and recommendations.

The Commission, in referring to the two strategic goals for statistics development for Asia and the Pacific, expressed its full support for regional initiatives in improving the following: population and social statistics; economic statistics; agricultural and rural statistics; environment statistics; civil registration and vital statistics; the modernization of official statistics; and regional coordination of statistical training.

6. The Commission recognized the challenges that were faced by less developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in providing the high levels of investment required for statistical development and called upon the international community to support such efforts.

7. The Commission emphasized that well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems were a prerequisite for exercising good governance,

¹ The complete report of the session (E/2013/39 E/ESCAP/69/27) is available at <http://www.unescap.org/commission/69>.

² The resolutions from the session are available at http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/2013-Resolutions-E69_27E.pdf

safeguarding the rights of citizens and developing and implementing health programmes. As such, civil registration and statistical systems were among the fundamental building blocks for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

8. The Commission complimented the innovative approach taken by the Committee on Statistics in developing a core set of population and social statistics and emphasized its role as a guide for capacity-building in Asia and the Pacific.

9. The Commission emphasized the importance of further work to develop national capacities for the production and dissemination of environment statistics.

Appreciation of the role of SIAP and the Government of Japan

10. The Commission acknowledged the importance and effectiveness of the training provided by SIAP in increasing statistical capacity in the region and pledged continued support for the Institute. In that regard the Commission stressed the importance and benefits of cooperation between statistical training institutes and expansion of Internet-based learning courses, as recommended by the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific during its eighth session.

11. The Commission noted with appreciation that Japan, the host Government of the Institute, had maintained its cash contribution for fiscal year 2013 at the same level as in the previous fiscal year despite its serious financial condition, and that its in-kind contributions had maintained the high quality of the Institute's training facilities.

B. Outcomes of the seventieth session of ESCAP

12. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held its seventieth session in Bangkok from 2 to 23 May 2014, with the theme of "Regional Connectivity for Shared Prosperity".³

Adoption of resolutions in the field of statistics

13. The Commission adopted one resolution related to statistics, namely resolution 70/2 on Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific⁴

Appreciation of the role of statistics in development and the achievements of the Committee on Statistics, its Bureau, and the secretariat

14. The Commission noted the critical importance of statistics to economic, social and environmental development and in achieving the goals of the emerging development agenda beyond 2015. In that regard, the Commission appreciated the contribution of the secretariat at the 45th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission to positioning statistics as a development objective in its own right and as an integral component of the development agenda beyond 2015.

15. In stressing the importance of statistics capacity development, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to the two strategic goals of the Committee on Statistics and expressed its continuous support to the work of the expert groups established by the Committee to design and implement capacity

³ The complete report of the session (E/2014/39 E/ESCAP/70/34) is available at <http://www.unescap.org/commission/70>.

⁴ Resolution 70/2 is available at http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E70_RES2E.pdf.

development programmes to achieve those goals. The Commission took note of the progress that was being made by member States in developing their civil registration and vital statistics systems, and underlined the importance to the region of further capacity building in that area. In that regard the Commission expressed support for the three goals of the draft regional action framework that will be considered for endorsement at the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, to be held in Bangkok from 24 to 28 November 2014.

Support for SIAP and the Government of Japan

16. The Commission noted the importance and effectiveness of the training provided by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP). It noted the request for SIAP to develop training courses on the green economy and environmental economic accounting, and deliver joint SIAP and International Monetary Fund (IMF) training courses on economic statistics for statisticians from central banks, ministries of finance and national statistics offices.

17. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the support provided by Japan as the host Government of SIAP. It noted with appreciation that Japan had secured a cash contribution for SIAP at the same level as the previous fiscal year and would continue to provide in-kind contributions, such as those in support of the Institute's strategy to expand and improve e-learning courses. Further, the Commission noted the importance of cash and in-kind contributions from ESCAP members, associate members and international organizations to sustain SIAP training programmes.

C. Outcomes of the forty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission

18. The Statistical Commission held its forty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 26 February to 1 March 2013. The Asia-Pacific region was represented in the Bureau of the session through representatives from Australia and the Russian Federation, who served as Vice-Chairs. The following extract of decisions made by the Commission emphasizes those that are of direct relevance to the ongoing work of the Committee or otherwise highlight action at the regional level.⁵

Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

19. The Commission

20. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Reiterated the importance of the Fundamental Principles being widely known and respected among users and producers of official statistics, and in particular at the political level, both nationally and globally, and therefore decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly the endorsement of the Principles, together with the newly revised preamble;

(b) Stressed the need to focus now on implementation, and encouraged the Friends of the Chair group to conclude its work by formulating, with the assistance of the secretariat of the United Nations Statistics Division, guidelines on how to ensure the full independence of national statistical systems and on how

⁵ The complete report on the forty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc13/2013-Report-E.pdf>.

to strengthen implementation, based on good practices developed at the national and regional levels;

(c) Encouraged in this context the Friends of the Chair group to explore ways to effectively address perceived violations of the Fundamental Principles and to reflect upon how the applicability of the Principles could be extended beyond the realm of official statistics, specifically to the private sector.

National Accounts

21. The Statistical Commission:

1. Noted the outcome of the surveys on plans by countries for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, and expressed concern that, despite progress in a number of countries, many countries are still a long way from adjusting their collections of supporting statistics for implementing the SNA;

2. Urged countries to develop strategic planning frameworks, taking into account their priorities for the national work programme for national accounts and supporting statistics to support evidence-based policymaking and to allocate sufficient resources for the statistical programme of work on the implementation of national accounts and supporting statistics;

3. Requested the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Working Group, supporting countries and other regional organizations, to scale up coordination, advocacy and resources for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics at the national level, where required, by promoting stronger commitment by national Governments to advancing the work programme for national accounts and supporting statistics;

4. Requested countries to support the United Nations Statistics Division in this task, taking into account, inter alia, coordination, political engagement and resources at the national level, lessons learned from other international initiatives, such as the International Comparison Programme and the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, the sharing of national experiences, engagement of the national statistical system, including central banks and other ministries, as well as the data and metadata reporting mechanisms to regional and international organizations, common existing software and other tools for the compilation of national accounts and the broader measures of progress presently considered by countries;

5. Recognized that the compilation of gross domestic product is a fundamental statistical reporting requirement for countries and an essential element in the formulation of the statistical response to the work programme on the broader measures of progress, as articulated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)⁶;

6. Requested the Working Group and the regional commissions to ensure that the collection, validation and dissemination of the data collected from countries are harmonized and that unnecessary duplication is avoided.

7. Welcomed the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts⁷, and expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Working Group over the past year;

⁶ General Assembly resolution 66/288.

⁷ E/CN.3/2013/4.

Environmental-economic accounting

22. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Adopted the implementation strategy for the System of Environmental- Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework recommending a flexible and modular approach, and urged the Committee of Experts to agree on a medium-term programme of work for the implementation of SEEA, including advancing the issues on the SEEA Central Framework research agenda and the development of a core set of tables and accounts, in order to develop coordination mechanisms among the relevant international and regional agencies for effective management of the programme and to actively seek funding to support the implementation activities;

(b) Requested the Committee of Experts to develop diagnostic tools, compilation guidelines and training materials to support the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework and strengthen supporting statistics in collaboration with other international and regional agencies;

(c) Welcomed the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting as an important first step in the development of a statistical framework for ecosystem accounting, and encouraged its use by international and regional agencies and countries wishing to test and experiment in this new area of statistics;

(d) Recognized SEEA as a useful measurement framework to inform several policy frameworks, including but not limited to the green economy and green growth, sustainable development and various international initiatives, in the follow-up to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the formulation of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

Environment statistics

23. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Endorsed the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries, and recognized it as a useful tool in the context of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda;

(b) Endorsed the action plan and the establishment of an Expert Group on Environment Statistics, noted the interest of several countries to participate in the Expert Group, and requested that the terms of reference of the Expert Group be developed, including a timetable and reporting mechanism;

(c) Stressed the importance of strong coordination between the implementation of the revised Framework and that of the System of Environmental- Economic Accounting Central Framework;

(d) Emphasized the need for supporting the revised Framework with detailed methodological guidance and training material that build upon existing methodological resources, where available, and that are coordinated with ongoing methodological work in related fields of statistics;

(e) Stressed the need of countries at the early stages of the development of their environment statistics programmes for increased technical assistance and capacity-building, and called on international organizations for support in that regard.

Agricultural statistics

24. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Took note with appreciation of the significant progress made in the implementation of all areas of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, including the development of the governance mechanisms at the global and regional levels and the mobilization of the required resources;

(b) Appreciated the efforts to establish collaboration and partnerships for better coordination of capacity-building efforts and research in agricultural statistics, and the work that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and many partners are undertaking in developing cost-effective methodologies and tools;

(c) Encouraged the Global Steering Committee to further streamline the research agenda and capacity-building activities, with an initial focus on improving methodologies or the measurement of crop production, areas and yields for food security monitoring;

(d) Encouraged the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all participating partners to accelerate the implementation of the Global Strategy, recognizing the significant impact that implementation will have on the capacity of countries to produce reliable and timely agricultural statistics;

(e) Highlighted the important role that regional participating partners play in the implementation of the Global Strategy, by facilitating the exchange of good practices, encouraging South-South cooperation and allowing better tailored technical assistance and training;

(f) Requested countries, resource partners and other donors to further support the implementation of the Global Strategy and the mobilization of resources required for filling the funding gaps;

Gender statistics

25. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation of the development of standards, methodological guidelines and training manuals on gender statistics, in particular on time use and on violence against women;

(b) Welcomed the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative, jointly implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, emphasized the need to ensure that the work is carried out in a timely manner and is in line with the Global Gender Statistics Programme, and noted that other international organizations engaged in this work stand ready to support these activities in line with their mandates and objectives;

(c) Supported the proposed next steps under the Global Gender Statistics Programme to provide training and assistance to strengthen the capacity of countries to produce and disseminate gender statistics and to use gender statistics for policymaking;

(d) Agreed on the use of the minimum set of gender indicators, developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, as a guide for the national production and international compilation of gender statistics, requested further clarification on the protocols of data collection from countries as well as detailed metadata, and requested further consideration of indicators on the valuation of unpaid work and on migrants;

(e) Encouraged greater integration of gender statistics into other areas of official statistics, such as sustainable development indicators;

(f) Recognized that additional resources are needed to further develop and implement national work programmes on gender statistics, and requested the donor community to devote adequate resources to this area;

(g) Expressed its appreciation of the work of the Friends of the Chair on indicators of violence against women, noted that the group had successfully completed its tasks and could therefore be terminated, and noted in this context the need to take cultural specificities of countries into account.

Crime Statistics

26. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Supported the proposed activities presented in the road map for improving crime statistics and suggested that the ambitious list of activities be further prioritized and a more detailed timetable be developed;

(b) Stressed the importance of coordination at the national level, and invited national statistical authorities to initiate and establish close cooperation with criminal justice system institutions at the national level, thus establishing a national framework for collecting crime and criminal justice statistics;

(c) Approved the plan to finalize by 2015 an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes, and noted that such a classification will serve as a powerful methodological tool for harmonization and for improving international and regional comparability;

(d) Requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide technical support to countries in improving crime and criminal justice statistics, as necessary and subject to the availability of resources.

Health Statistics

27. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed concern about the inadequate consultation and coordination between the World Health Organization and the international statistical community in the area of health statistics, and called for effective cooperation among the World Health Organization and relevant inter-agency working groups and international agencies;

(b) Called for effective cooperation and collaboration among the World Health Organization, national statistical offices and line ministries involved in the production of health statistics;

(c) Expressed deep concern that the development of a model disability survey by the World Health Organization did not take into account the significant work already carried out by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and urged close collaboration in developing the survey to ensure that the data items proposed to be collected by the World Health Organization are consistent with those developed by the Washington Group, unless there is a compelling case to do otherwise, thereby avoiding confusion and duplication of efforts;

(d) Expressed concern that the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases might be too complex and challenging for countries to implement, and requested the World Health Organization to give sufficient time to the revision process and to subject the revised classification to field testing and assessment before adoption;

(e) Acknowledged that civil registration and vital statistics are an important element of national statistical systems, noted the lack of a global coordination mechanism in this area, and called upon the United Nations Statistics Division, the regional commissions and relevant regional and international organizations to strengthen national capacity for enhancing civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(f) Called attention to the need to sustain data collection efforts in the area of health statistics, including through the Demographic and Health Survey and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, recognized in particular the importance of health statistics in the context of monitoring progress in relevant Millennium Development Goals, and encouraged countries to scale up their data collection efforts for the final Millennium Development Goals assessment in 2015;

(g) Acknowledged the challenges of using administrative data from the health sector and the other fields related to health, such as nutrition and social protection, for the production of health statistics, and called upon relevant international and regional organizations to help strengthen national capacity with a view to improving the collection and analysis of health statistics at the national level.

Coordination of statistical activities in the United Nations system

28. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Reiterated the need for effective coordination of statistical work among United Nations system agencies, and international agencies in general.

Follow-up to the policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission: response to Rio+20 mandate for broader measures of progress

29. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Decided to launch a work programme to develop broader measures of progress;

(b) Recognized the importance of developing adequate measures to support the evolving debate on sustainable development policy at both the national and international levels, and noted in this context that significant work has already been done in past years and is currently being carried out by the Commission (for example, the Millennium Development Goals, the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting) as well as by national, regional and international organizations;

(c) Noted that, even if no single measure captures today's complex development notion and even if it will take time to develop a set of technically solid and globally agreed measures of progress, there is a need to start the work as soon as possible on defining such a set;

(d) Stressed that "broader measures of progress" have to be part of a larger information infrastructure/architecture in order to support development policy at all levels and need therefore to be linked to evolving sustainable development goals and any framework that will support the post-2015 development agenda;

(e) Insisted that the statistical community needs to be adequately involved in the discussion on new development frameworks, in order to advise early on any formulation of targets and indicators;

(f) Expressed concern that the statistical capacity of many countries, especially, but not exclusively, developing countries, is limited and that significant investments for statistical capacity over the coming years will be necessary so that statistics for sustainable development are themselves sustainable;

(g) Supported the formation of a Friends of the Chair group to build a work programme to develop broader measures of progress based on a stocktaking exercise of current national, regional and international practices in this field, and to conduct a technical review of these existing efforts with a view to identifying good/best practices and to facilitating the sharing of knowledge, especially for the benefit of developing countries; requested the Friends of the Chair group to closely monitor the ongoing debate on development frameworks and to keep the Bureau of the Statistical Commission informed, undertaking an active dialogue with United Nations bodies and the policy sphere in order to ensure that a robust statistical measurement approach is incorporated from the outset in preparations for the post-2015 development agenda. Reiterated the need for effective coordination of statistical work among United Nations system agencies, and international agencies in general.

D. Outcomes of the forty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission

30. The Statistical Commission held its forty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 7 March 2014. The Asia-Pacific region was represented in the Bureau of the session through representative from China who served as a Vice-Chair. The following extract of decisions made by the Commission emphasizes those that are of direct relevance to the ongoing work of the Committee or otherwise highlight action at the regional level.⁸

Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

31. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Commended the report of the Friends of the Chair^{9,1} and expressed its sincere appreciation for the hard work in preparing the report and the background material;

(b) Supported in general the recommendations contained in the report;

(c) Welcomed the first draft of the implementation guidelines as an excellent starting point, and asked the Friends of the Chair group to continue its work on this important document; in this context, it invited countries to enrich the implementation guidelines with further comments and submission of good country practices; and agreed that the guidelines should be a living document in the future;

(d) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division to make the completed implementation guidelines available on an improved website dedicated to the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which would also contain relevant and up-to-date country documents such as statistical laws and examples of regional good practices, for example, in the implementation of codes of practice;

(e) Agreed that the guidelines on independence and addressing perceived violations as well as the extension of the applicability of the principles to the private sector require further reflection and clarification, and asked the

⁸ The complete report on the forty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc14/2014-Report-E.pdf>

⁹ E/CN.3/2014/2.

Friends of the Chair group to continue its work in these areas, taking into account the comments and proposals made at the High Level Forum on Official Statistics and the Commission session;

(f) Underlined that the endorsement by the General Assembly provides a positive impetus to increase the visibility and enhance the understanding and awareness of the Fundamental Principles by bringing them to the attention of politicians, other data providers and the private sector, and also provides opportunities for capacity-building; and noted that the ongoing process towards the post-2015 development agenda is a unique opportunity to renew efforts for the implementation of the Fundamental Principles as a critical tool for accountability and transparency, and stressed, in this context, the important role of regional and subregional bodies;

(g) Emphasized that the essence of the Fundamental Principles must apply also to the international agencies, welcomed the announcement by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities to work on the related “Principles governing international statistical activities”, and urged the international organizations to strengthen their efforts to implement these Principles;

(h) Stressed the importance of national legislation to anchor the Fundamental Principles in countries and noted the many examples where the Principles have guided the formulation of statistical laws;

(i) Emphasized the importance of formulating dissemination strategy at the national, regional and global levels that will bring together producers, users and suppliers of official statistics to abide on the utilization of the Principles;

(j) Agreed with the need of continued monitoring of the implementation of the Principles at the national, regional and global levels (the latter in intervals no larger than five years) using various modes, such as self-assessment or peer review, as appropriate.

Working methods of the Statistical Commission

32. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Emphasized the need to manage time effectively but also recognized the need for interactive professional exchange, which is at the core of the work of the Commission;

(b) Supported in particular the recommendation to strengthen the role of the Bureau to play an active role in the intersession period, consulting and informing countries and international organizations in the process;

Programme review: broader measures of progress

33. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the work on the review of measures of sustainable development and human well-being, and requested that the stocktaking exercise be completed continuously, building on the inputs from countries and regions and work already done around the world, in particular taking into account the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Frame work and the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Eurostat/ Economic Commission for Europe);

(b) Reiterated the importance of an early and ongoing engagement of the statistical community at all levels, including the national level, in the design of the post-2015 goals and targets;

(c) Requested the Friends of the Chair to continue to provide and facilitate statistical support in the process towards the post-2015 development agenda in order to ensure that statistical considerations are appropriately taken into account and to continue the dialogue with the Open Working Group;

(d) Requested the Friends of the Chair to engage in the debate on the data revolution, and reiterated the critical need for adequate statistical capacity, both technical and institutional, and the need for coordinated efforts and investments to fill the data gaps and satisfy the new data requirements;

(e) Requested the Friends of the Chair to address the need for the development of new data sources, methods and methodologies resulting from the requirements of the post-2015 development agenda, taking into particular account the possibilities of new technologies;

(f) Suggested that the Friends of the Chair group include in its future work programme the issue of household surveys and their critical role in providing data for the post-2015 development agenda, and acknowledged the offer by the World Bank to take the lead in a consultative process to prepare a report for the consideration of the Commission in 2015;

(g) Stressed the importance of an integrated statistics approach and the work on a shared standard business architecture and information model to allow for efficiency gains specifically needed to meet the new demands of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda;

(h) Endorsed the proposed work programme of the Friends of the Chair, including the development of an implementation framework for the monitoring and measurement of the post-2015 development agenda in partnership and coordination with countries, regional and international organizations, as well as other stakeholders and donors that can support implementation;

National accounts

34. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed appreciation for the activities undertaken by international organizations, regional commissions, other regional organizations and countries providing technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics;

(b) Appreciated the progress on the completion of a number of manuals, handbooks and guidelines that facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, urged the Working Group to expedite the development of the handbooks and guidelines within a stipulated timeline, and requested that these materials be made available in all the official languages of the United Nations;

(c) Requested the Working Group, the regional commissions and other international and regional organizations to harmonize the collection, validation and dissemination of the data collected from countries to avoid unnecessary duplication, taking into consideration the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange data transmission mechanism;

(d) Recognized that to scale up the coordination, the advocacy and the resources for the implementation of the 2008 SNA at the national level requires an integrated statistics approach, adopted by the Commission for the global initiative on the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics and building on, and in support of, the ongoing regional statistical capacity development programmes;

(e) Confirmed that the scope of a capacity-building programme on integrated statistics and its ramifications for coordination and global governance mechanisms of such a programme extends beyond the remit of the mandate of the Working Group;

(f) Expressed the significant need for technical assistance to many developing countries in adopting an integrated statistics programme in support of the implementation of the 2008 SNA, in this context requested the development of an integrated business statistics programme and related guidelines on programme management;

(g) Recognized that countries should take ownership of the required actions for strengthening the statistical production process, institutional arrangements, and a communication strategy with users, to facilitate the compilation of the required scope and detail of economic statistics and national accounts, based on country priorities for evidence based policymaking;

(h) Supported the formation of a “friends of the chair” group to work out the modalities for establishing a harmonized integrated statistics programme, focusing on overcoming national issues in producing internationally comparable macroeconomic accounts, taking into consideration existing statistical capacity development programmes in close collaboration with the regional commissions and other international and regional organizations.

Environmental-economic accounting

35. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the publication of the SEEA Central Framework and the issuing of its preliminary translations in the official languages of the United Nations;

(b) Recognized SEEA as an important statistical framework for the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals indicators, and requested the Committee of Experts to review the statistical notes prepared for the Open Working Group to ensure that SEEA is adequately reflected;

(c) Recognized the importance of mainstreaming SEEA in the national strategies for the development of statistics;

(d) Urged the Committee of Experts to finalize the core tables and accounts resulting from the SEEA Central Framework to assist countries in the implementation of SEEA;

(e) Agreed to establish a technical committee on the SEEA Central Framework responsible for advancing the research agenda of the SEEA Central Framework, with focus on the classification of environmental activities and goods and services sector, and supporting the implementation of SEEA through preparing and reviewing technical material ensuring full consistency with the SEEA Central Framework;

(f) Stressed the importance of linking the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework with that of the *System of National Accounts*¹⁰ 2008;5

(g) Recognized the need for support in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, and requested the Committee to scale up the programme on the SEEA implementation, strengthen the capacity-building programme for developing countries and develop a campaign to raise funds for capacity-building at the country level;

¹⁰ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.XVII.29.

(h) Requested the Committee of Experts to work in close cooperation with existing international initiatives on the development of tools and core tables and accounts as well as in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, for example, the Ulaanbaatar Group on statistics for economies based on natural resources, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, on the development of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture (SEEA-Agri);

(i) Reiterated the importance of strengthening the dialogue with different stakeholders at the national level with, for example, representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry in charge of Environment and the geo-spatial community, first through sensitization and then the adoption of a modular approach to the implementation of SEEA;

(j) Agreed to establish a technical committee on the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting to advance its research and testing agenda prioritizing those issues that could be solved in the short to medium term;

(k) Encouraged the Committee to establish cooperation with the geospatial community and with existing initiatives on the measurement and assessment of ecosystems, such as Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity;

Information and communications technology for development

36. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Noted the important role of information and communications technology statistics in tracking the global information society and in the post-2015 development debate, including in the discussion on the data revolution;

(b) Endorsed the revised core list of information and communications technology indicators¹¹, and asked for its wide circulation so that countries and other agencies may use it as a reference;

(c) Recognized the importance of capacity-building activities and urged development partners to provide assistance in this regard.

Disability statistics

37. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Acknowledged the wide range of activities and accomplishments of the Washington Group, including developing and testing a short set of questions on functioning, which can be used in censuses or sample surveys;

(b) Noted, in this connection, the importance of considering the sensitivity and appropriateness of questions, when such questions are asked, while welcoming the extension of the Washington Group's scope of work to include the measurement of child disability;

(c) Recognized the importance of training and technical cooperation activities to be provided to countries to effectively build national capacity in measuring disability, and called for more workshops at the national and regional levels, addressing the possibility of using administrative records for the purpose of producing disability statistics, and providing guidance on the inclusion of developed questions in the 2020 round of censuses and surveys;

¹¹ Ibid., annex.

(d) Supported the work programme of the Washington Group for 2014-2015, encouraging continued work on the extended question set on functioning for adult children, and suggested the expansion of the scope of work to include data analysis and the dissemination of disability statistics.

Big data and modernization of statistical systems

38. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Reiterated that big data constitute a source of information that cannot be ignored and that the global statistical community must organize itself and take urgent action to exploit the possibilities and harness the challenges effectively;

(b) Recognized the need to further investigate and share experiences on possible data sources, challenges and areas of use of big data for official statistics at the global level;

(c) Supported broadly the proposal to create a global working group on the use of big data for official statistics, which will manage the globally relevant issues, and requested that:

(d) The programme of work of the group would complement and avoid duplication of the work carried out by the regional commissions, subregional statistical forums such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Group on Statistics and other international statistical agencies;

(e) The programme of work would pay special attention to the circumstances of developing countries, in particular the capacity constraints of the least developed countries;

(f) Requested the global working group to include the following in its programme of work:

(1) To make an inventory of ongoing activities and concrete examples regarding the use of big data for official statistics at the regional, subregional and national levels;

(2) To address the concerns of methodology, standards and norms, human resources, research, training, quality, volatility and, with priority, confidentiality, access to data and legislation related to big data;

(3) To address the issue of obtaining “access at no cost” to big data from the private sector for official statistical purposes, as well as the issue of access to transborder data or access to data on transboundary phenomena;

(4) To develop guidelines to classify the various types of big data sources and approaches,

(5) To develop methodological guidelines related to big data, including guidelines for all the legal aspects;

(6) To formulate an adequate communication strategy for data providers and users on the issue of use of big data for official statistics;

(7) To reach out to other communities, especially those more experienced in information technology issues or in the use of open data platforms;

(8) To report to the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session in 2015 on the work done;

Coordination of statistical activities in the United Nations system

39. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Stressed that effective coordination is essential, especially in the area of data sharing in order to reduce the reporting burden on countries;

(b) Stressed the importance of effective coordination among the agencies of the United Nations system and the national statistical offices in order to promote the use of official statistics by the agencies and to avoid duplication and discrepancies in statistical sources;

(c) Endorsed the proposal that the United Nations chief statisticians hold regular meetings, and mandated the group to follow up on the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair for improved coordination and report back to the Commission.

World Statistics Day

40. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Proposed to celebrate the next World Statistics Day on 20 October 2015;

(b) Agreed with the general theme for the next World Statistics Day: “Statistics for better decision-making — statistics for better development/life”, but requested the Bureau to finalize the wording of the exact slogan in consultation with communications experts, taking into account that the theme could be more targeted according to country-specific issues emerging in the given year;

(c) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division to provide appropriate support to countries, regional and supranational organizations and thematic-oriented institutions in observance of World Statistics Day 2015 and to provide publicity material for the events being organized under the common theme.

Regional statistical development

41. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the comprehensive report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific¹² on statistics development in the region and in particular its thematic orientation, advocating for a prominent role for statistics in the post-2015 development agenda;

(b) Extended its appreciation to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the preparation of a video showcasing statistical development in the region;

(c) Noted with appreciation the work of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in providing statistical training;

(d) Welcomed the progress made in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen statistics capacity through regional cooperation under the auspices of the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and noted, in that regard, the importance of investments in national statistical systems, the need to strengthen the quality of statistical products, the potential for sharing of best practices and working with subregional organizations;

(e) Noted the existing differences in the statistical capacities of the countries in the region, and stressed the importance of developing the statistical

¹² E/CN.3.2014/15

systems in countries with very limited capacities to meet at least the minimum requirements of the post-2015 development agenda;

(f) Stressed the importance of high-quality statistics as a tool for accountability and good governance and thus an element of the post-2015 development agenda, and noted, in this context, the recognition by many countries of the inclusion of statistics as a goal in its own right;

(g) Called for the development of better measures of statistical development, in close cooperation with the subregional statistical forums such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Group on Statistics.

E. Outcomes of the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission

42. The Statistical Commission held its forty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 26 February to 1 March 2013. The Asia-Pacific region was represented in the Bureau of the session through a representative from China. The following extract of decisions made by the Commission emphasizes those that are of direct relevance to the ongoing work of the Committee or otherwise highlight action at the regional level.¹³

Decision 1: Data in support of the post-2015 development agenda

Broader measures of progress

43. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation to the Friends of the Chair group on broader measures of progress (FOC) for its comprehensive report and productive work done in a very short time. Commended the proactive support that the FOC provided to the intergovernmental process on the post-2015 development agenda, and in particular its preparatory work on an indicator framework, which has already been recognized by the intergovernmental process;

(b) Welcomed the two background documents on the results of the survey on broader measures of progress and data availability, which provide important insights into national practices of measuring progress and the availability of data to measure the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda;

(c) Endorsed the proposed roadmap for the development and implementation of an indicator framework and in particular its suggested timetable aiming at an endorsement of the indicator framework at the forty-seventh session of the Commission in 2016. The Commission stressed that the development of a robust and high quality indicator framework is a technical process which requires time and needs to be conducted in stages, including the possibility of future refinements as knowledge evolves;

(d) Emphasized that, given the capacity constraints of member states, the global indicator framework should only contain a limited number of indicators, should build on the experiences of the MDGs and take into account conceptual indicator frameworks that have already been developed;

(e) Expressed its concern regarding the presentation of the preliminary results of an initial assessment of a possible list of indicators for the upcoming meeting of the intergovernmental negotiation in March 2015 and stressed that this is to be considered only a preliminary proposal and that such list should not preclude in any way the further refinement of the listed indicators based on subsequent detailed technical discussions;

¹³ The complete report on the forty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc13/2013-Report-E.pdf>.

(f) Asked the Bureau of the Commission, with support of the FOC, to finalize in a transparent process the technical materials to be submitted to the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations in March 2015 based on the preliminary results of the assessment survey and all preparatory technical work of the FOC;

(g) Endorsed the formation of the Interagency and expert group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG) and:

i. requested the Bureau to oversee a review of its proposed terms of reference based on the discussion at the session;

ii. emphasized the need for national statistical offices to play the leading role in the development of the indicator framework to ensure national ownership and that existing regional mechanisms should be used to ensure equitable regional representation;

iii. requested the group to work in an open and transparent manner and to take into account the conclusions of the Expert Group Meeting on an indicator framework held on 25 and 26 February 2015.

(h) Supported the formation of a new high-level group (HLG) to provide strategic leadership for the SDG implementation process. Such group should consist of national statistical offices, and regional and international organizations as observers operating under the auspices of the Statistical Commission. The HLG is to ensure that the post-2015 monitoring system is nationally owned and to foster capacity-building, partnership and coordination for post-2015 monitoring. It requested that the detailed terms of reference be consulted with member states and approved by the Bureau of the Commission;

(i) Endorsed the work programme of the FOC group on broader measures of progress which is expected to provide its final report to the forty-seventh session of the Commission in 2016. It took note that the FOC group will not duplicate the work of the IAEG-SDG and of the HLG;

(j) Stressed the urgent need for investments into national statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, to measure progress towards the post-2015 development agenda at national, regional and global levels, and enable national statistical offices to play a leading and coordinating role in this process.

Emerging issue: the data revolution

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Took note of the report and the recommendations by the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development as contained in the report "A world that counts" and Annex III of Secretary-Generals report on Emerging Issues;

(b) Welcomed the invitation by the Secretary-General to establish a comprehensive programme of work under its auspices;

(c) Recognized the challenges posed by the new monitoring requirements for the SDGs and recommended that new investments be made to increase statistical capacity, including for data collection, and in particular for countries in special situations as the Small Islands Developing States and the fragile states;

(d) Stressed that a key element of the data revolution is making data available to all;

(e) Recognized that the data revolution presents a set of new opportunities for National Statistical Offices; proper governance mechanisms will be needed to engage with new stakeholders and for the use of new data sources

(f) Stressed that National Statistical Offices will have to play a strong coordinating role; including validating data coming from new data sources outside the official statistical system to ensure that they all comply with the Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics;

(g) Stressed the need for data quality and accountability frameworks for the utilization of new data sources and for UNSD to provide guidance on how to develop and implement them;

(h) Proposed to establish mechanisms to increase access to innovation and technology;

(i) Stressed that the implementation of the data revolution might take different forms depending on the priorities of the countries and that in that context, the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics will need to be upgraded to include the elements of the data revolution that are relevant to national priorities;

(j) Acknowledged that managing the data revolution will require new skills from official statisticians and recommended that the conclusions of the High Level Forum on Partnership for Capacity in the context of the Data Revolution, held on 2 March 2015, be taken into consideration;

(k) Recognized that a World Forum on Sustainable Development Data would be a suitable platform for intensifying cooperation with various professional groups such as IT, geospatial information managers and data scientists, users as well as with civil society stakeholders.

Big data

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Appreciated the report of the Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for Official Statistics and congratulated the group for its work accomplished so far;

(b) Thanked China for organizing a very successful international conference on Big Data for Official Statistics in October 2014, as well as for successfully hosting the first meeting of the GWG;

(c) Agreed with the Terms of Reference and mandate of the GWG as described in the annex of the report, as well as with the division of the work into various task teams, while requesting the GWG to pay special attention to issues such as:

- i. Sharing experiences of lessons learned from Big Data projects;
- ii. Quality concerns related to the use of Big Data for official statistics;
- iii. Coordination of the work of the GWG with the work undertaken at the regional level, especially in Europe, in order to build on achievements and repurpose and reuse outputs;
- iv. Existing technology gap of developing countries, and need for funding for developing countries to be able to take part in the Big Data projects;
- v. Legal frameworks for access to Big Data sources, especially from the private sector, while addressing privacy concerns;
- vi. Skills, human resources and capacity building needed to address Big Data adequately, especially with relation to Data Science and IT;
- vii. Show and explain the limitations of Big Data for official statistics;
- viii. Building partnerships is necessary to exploit and harness Big Data, especially with private sector, research institutes and academia;

(d) Requested the GWG to look into the use of other Big Data sources in addition to mobile phone data, social media data and satellite imagery, such as transaction data through e-commerce, and also to look into the trans-boundary aspects and associated challenges of the Big Data sources;

(e) Stressed that Big Data should be seen as part of secondary data sources, and that in that respect the use of administrative data source should receive due attention as well;

(f) Supported the proposals of the GWG to conduct a global survey on Big Data projects, and supported as well the pilot Big Data projects conducted under the umbrella of the GWG, while encouraging and welcoming participation of interested countries or institutes with the purpose of sharing experiences and building capacity.

Transformative agenda for official statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report on the outcome of the Global Conference on the Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics;

(b) Supported the conclusions of the Global Conference focussing on the modernization of statistical systems, taking into account but not limited to the following thematic areas:

- i. coordination of the global statistical system;
- ii. communication and advocacy;
- iii. data collection, processing and dissemination through integrated statistical systems;
- iv. innovative methods, tools and IT infrastructure, including standards based production architecture; and v) training and capacity building;

(c) Recognized the need for modernizing and strengthening the global, regional and statistical systems, irrespective of the level of statistical development, in order to respond more effectively and efficiently to the new policy requirements;

(d) Suggested that the modernization of the statistical production process requires a new architecture for data collection, processing and dissemination through a standard-based production process and adoption of an integrated statistics approach away from the traditional stovepiped approach;

(e) Welcomed the valuable contribution by the UNECE Highlevel Group on the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services to establish standards for supporting the modernization programme at the global level, the offer to share the experiences and outputs of the Group, and noted the proposal of the Highlevel Group to report progress on its work to the Commission;

(f) Recognised the need for strengthening the coordination of statistical capacity building activities on technical and managerial issues by the global, regional and country level taking into consideration the financial, human and technological requirements. These requirements are to be articulated and brought forward to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in July 2015, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

(g) Recognized the need for strengthening the coordination of work streams between the global and regional level and requested the Bureau of the Commission, with the support of the Secretariat, to conduct a mapping of the existing coordination mechanisms and work streams with a view to identifying

those areas that require priority action for a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics and to submit proposals for consideration by the Commission at its next session.

Decision 2: Population and housing censuses

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on Population and Housing Censuses, which assessed the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme by countries and addressed achievements and challenges that countries faced;

(b) Acknowledged that for the 2010 census round, many countries have conducted a census successfully and innovatively, in terms of the use of alternative census methods and modern technologies;

(c) Noted with appreciation the countries that provided bilateral support to others in conducting censuses, including through South-South collaboration, especially in terms of training, exchange of national experience and sharing of census equipment, and expects this trend to continue in the 2020 census round;

(d) Underscored the critical importance of population and housing census for the post-2015 development agenda, in particular, as a valuable source of data for SDG monitoring;

(e) Endorsed the draft resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme and its submission to the Economic and Social Council for adoption;

(f) Recognized with appreciation the timely work of the international expert group in preparing the 3rd revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses.

(g) Welcomed and adopted the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3 and encouraged countries to begin its implementation keeping in mind the importance of setting quality standards for the conduct of the census;

(h) Recognized that countries may face technical and financial constraints and require support, including in the utilization of advanced technologies and administrative data sources in the 2020 census round;

(i) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division and other international and regional organizations to enhance their technical assistance to national statistical offices, especially in early stages of planning, in order to strengthen national capacity for carrying out the 2020 round of Population and Housing Censuses.

(j) Endorsed the programme of work as contained in the Secretary-Generals report and requested the Statistics Division to take a leading role in setting up:

- i. a microdata repository, with sufficient consultation with Member States, and addressing privacy and other technical concerns;
- ii. a web-based forum for countries to exchange experiences and knowledge in census taking.

Decision 3: Crime statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the work done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) and their partners, and endorsed the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) as an international statistical standard.

(b) Recognized the ICCS as an International Standard for data collection, both from administrative records and survey generated data, and as an analytical tool to elicit unique information on crime drivers and factors;

(c) Confirmed UNODC as the custodian of the ICCS and agreed with the creation of a technical advisory group to provide substantive advice to and support the maintenance of the ICCS;

(d) Endorsed the outlined implementation plan for the classification at national, regional and international levels. Recognized that time and adequate resources in countries are needed for the implementation of the ICCS, and encouraged countries to undertake steps for a gradual implementation of the classification. It also requested UNODC to include an assessment of national capacities in the proposed implementation plan;

(e) Welcomed the progress made on the activities established in the Roadmap to improve crime statistics at the national and international levels as discussed and adopted by the Commission at its forty-fourth session in 2013, and reconfirmed the roadmap;

(f) Encouraged Member States and international organizations to sustain their efforts and strengthen their statistical systems on crime and criminal justice, to include crime statistics in their National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, and to provide support to the activities laid out for 2015-2020 in the report;

(g) Encouraged Member States to adopt the new international standards and best practices in crime statistics to support the data demands for monitoring SDGs in the areas of violence and justice;

(h) Appealed to Member States and donors to provide the necessary resources to allow for the successful implementation of the ICCS and other activities outlined in the roadmap.

Decision 4: Refugee statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of Statistics Norway and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees on statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons which was considered for the first time at the Commission as an independent discussion item;

(b) Acknowledged the growing concern about the lack of harmonization in definitions, classifications, and methods of data collection on refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons;

(c) the proposal to organize an international conference on refugee statistics, which would bring together international organizations, experts from national statistical offices and the- research community working in this area, to explore how best to incorporate the compilation of statistics on these populations into national statistical systems and to develop a set of recommendations for improving these statistics;

(d) Welcomed the offer of, and expressed its appreciation to, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) to host, in collaboration with Eurostat and others, the proposed international conference on refugees statistics in 2015;

(e) Noted the need for a handbook on statistics refugees and internally displaced persons as a practical guide for the collection, analysis and dissemination of these statistics, which takes into consideration existing methods and initiatives;

(f) Took note of the need for further research and analysis of the identification and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons and their impact on host societies;

(g) Underscored the need to enhance cooperation between national statistical offices, other concerned national agencies and international organizations actively working in the domain of and internally displaced persons;

(h) Urged international organizations to provide technical assistance and facilitate exchange of national experience with a view to enhancing the capacity of countries to collect, analyse and disseminate statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons.

(i) Requested the organizers of the international conference to report back to the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the outcome of the conference and on the next steps to improve statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons.

Decision 5: Household surveys

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report and thanked the World Bank and partners for introducing the topic of household surveys to the Statistics Commission after a long time;

(b) Acknowledged that household surveys have served as a major source of data for development planning and policy decisions, and that the data demand from household surveys would further grow in light of monitoring progress on the post-2015 development agenda;

(c) Noted with concern that changes and improvements are needed in the timing, content, quality, funding, national capacity building and coordination of the household surveys, for them to be effective for monitoring the SDGs;

(d) Endorsed the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS), under the aegis of the United Nations Statistics Division, in order to foster coordination and harmonization of household survey activities;

(e) Requested the development of the Terms of Reference of the Group under the guidance of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission, using the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Account as a model, and present it at the 47th session of the Commission;

(f) Urged that the work of the Working Group take into account the good practices of countries already available, but also the financial and technical constraints faced by countries in undertaking household surveys;

(g) Noted that many international institutions which are active in the area of household surveys as well as several National Statistical Offices have expressed their interest to participate in the Working Group or the Task Teams that will be established under the Group;

(h) Supported, as a priority, the piloting of an international code of practice for household surveys by a Task Team of the Group, stressing the needs to give due consideration to existing codes of practice at the national and regional levels;

(i) Supported the proposal of Conducting a study on priorities for research on cross-cutting methodological issues, including the issues of disaggregation, and the integration of different types of surveys and other data sources;

(j) Requested the Working Group to report back on this item to the Statistical Commission.

Decision 6: National Accounts

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts, and expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Working Group over the past year;

(b) Endorsed the programme of work of the Working Group and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts;

(c) Expressed its appreciation for the guidance provided on issues emerging from the implementation of the 2008 SNA and urged the Working Group to continue to give priority to practical guidance on issues that would facilitate the implementation of the SNA;

(d) Noted that a number of conceptual issues have emerged that extend beyond the 2008 SNA which may take a long time to resolve and requested the Working Group to set priorities for addressing the issues on the SNA research agenda and to report on the progress with resolving these issues to the Commission;

(e) Appreciated the completion of a number of manuals, handbooks and guidelines that facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, urged the Working Group to expedite the development of the newly proposed handbooks and guidelines, including the handbook on backcasting, as well as those in progress and requested that these materials be made available in all the United Nations official languages;

(f) Appreciated the activities undertaken by the Working Group members, regional commissions, other regional organizations and countries to facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA;

(g) Acknowledged the important role of Member States providing capacity building support to other Member States for the strengthening of SNA implementation and supporting statistics, pledged for a governance at the international level as it is the case for the ICP, and requested the international and regional organizations to step up their capacity building activities;

(h) Welcomed the progress with implementing the 2008 SNA, expressed concern at the relatively low compliance to the minimum required data set as well as a large number of Member States with outdated benchmark years and urged Member States to develop basic source data for the compilation of national accounts data that are policy relevant and fit for purpose and, in this context, focus and prioritize the efforts on the implementation of the SNA in terms of scope, detail and quality;

(i) Noted the progress with implementing the SDMX data transmission mechanism and sharing of national accounts data between international organizations and urged Member States to implement the SDMX technology to facilitate data transmission and significantly reduce the response burden of Member States submitting data to international organizations.

Decision 7: International trade and economic globalization statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Appreciated the report on the measurement of international trade and economic globalization and congratulated the Friends of the Chair group for its work accomplished;

(b) Agreed with the proposal of the FOC group to draft a handbook on a system of extended international and global accounts as the measurement framework for international trade and economic globalization, while:

- i. building on work accomplished on the measurement of international trade and economic globalization by others, including the work undertaken under auspices of the Eurostat, OECD and UNECE;
- ii. addressing the use of micro-data related to businesses, including administrative data, and their links to international trade data, as well as the issue of sharing micro-data among countries;
- iii. addressing the integration of economic, environmental and social dimensions of trade and globalization extending on the SNA and SEEA;
- iv. taking into account the different levels of sophistication of national statistical systems and the level of resources available to them;

(c) Endorsed the establishment of an expert group tasked with the development of the System of extended international and global accounts; proposed that this group be a continuation of the FOC group with the option for other countries to join, while balancing the geographical representation; and requested that the terms of reference of the expert group is established with a clear mandate, timetable and list of deliverables, so that appropriate momentum of the work of the group would be maintained;

(d) Further agreed with the proposed programme of work for the measurement of international trade and globalization, namely:

- i. promoting and advancing the creation of a global enterprise group register, building on and taking into account lessons learned from the ongoing EuroGroups Register project;
- ii. improving the measurement of firm heterogeneity based on alternative aggregations of micro-data and by further developing a classification of business functions, while cautioning against any change in the ISIC classification;
- iii. addressing asymmetries in bilateral trade and foreign direct investment while building on work already undertaken in several countries and coordinating this effort with work already being done by the OECD;
- iv. mainstreaming the development of recurrent global supply-use and input-output tables building on the work undertaken by OECD, to increase the coverage of the OECD-WTO database trade in value-added;

(e) Agreed with the proposal to establish an Intersecretariat working group for international trade and economic globalization statistics with the request to develop a mandate taking into account:

- i. the coordination of work undertaken by the various international and regional organizations in this field, while ensuring proper communication regarding work programs and activities worldwide, taking account of existing work and reducing duplication;

- ii. the promotion of the development of databases at international, regional and national level for international trade and economic globalization statistics; and
- iii. the coordination and promotion of capacity building activities to improve these statistics at micro-level for the better calculation of statistics at the macro-level.

Decision 8: Environmental and economic accounting

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting in advocating the importance of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) and advancing its implementation;

(b) Requested the Committee of Experts to closely collaborate with relevant groups to advocate and promote that the SEEA is properly reflected in the formulation of the sustainable development goals indicators, as well as follow up discussions related to the measurement of these indicators and building capacity in countries to develop SEEA-based indicators;

(c) Urged the Committee of Experts to advocate and promote scaling up its implementation programme exercising strong leadership in a concrete and well-resourced programme to Sport counties implementing the SEEA, with a clear timeline of objectives and deliverables;

(d) Noted the importance of formulating a common national plan to implement the SEEA at the country level and urged international and regional organizations to align their in-country work programmes to create synergies in the implementation and use of environmental accounting and supporting statistics, with particular consideration of challenges experienced in SEEA implementation for SIDS;

(e) Requested international and regional agencies to develop a joint programme of work including the development of internationally agreed materials supporting the implementation of the SEEA including guidance documents and training and communication materials, building on the strength of each agency and with clear definition of agencies' roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication efforts, and develop partnerships with relevant groups to strengthen the use of the SEEA towards harmonization of basic data and integration of non-traditional data sources which can support monitoring of the SDGs;

(f) As part of the effort to scale up the implementation programme, urged the Committee of Experts to further expand the training of trainers programmes based on a flexible and modular approach with due consideration to national priorities and technical capacities;

(g) Appreciated the pogs made in the drafting of the SEEA Technical Notes and Core Tables for the SEEA Central Framework, noting their usefulness in supporting a scheduled approach for the compilation of SEEA based accounts and derivation of SEEA based SDG indicators, and recommended that countries test the proposed Core Tables in view of the creation of an SEEA global database;

(h) Welcomed progress made in testing the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting and requested the committee of Experts to continue its work in advancing the testing and research agenda including the development of guidance documents and training materials with the objective of strengthening the capacity of the national statistics systems;

(i) Welcomed the completion of the first draft of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries noting its contribution to the post-2015 development agenda and the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, recommended its finalization and encouraged to follow a similar approach towards developing other sectoral SEEA sub-systems, and urged the expedient finalization and release of SEEA-Energy.

Decision 9: International Comparison Programme

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Took note of the first part of the report of the Friends of the Chair Group on the evaluation of the 2011 round of the International Comparison Programme; and expressed appreciation of the work undertaken by the Global Office, the Executive Board and the Technical Advisory Group in the ICP 2011 round;

(b) Welcomed the FOC reports initial findings of the ICP 2011 round demonstrating an increased country participation, improvements in PPP methodology, increased transparency and documentation, streamlined quality assessment processes, and improved outreach to increase the uses of PPP; and stressed that ICP should become a permanent element of the global statistical programme with ICP rounds be held on a more frequent basis;

(c) Supported the way forward by the FOC group, leading to the final FOC report to be presented to the 47th session of the Commission in 2016; in the process the FOC should continue to function in an open and transparent manner;

(d) Welcomed recommendations to be formulated regarding methodology, capacity building and funding, which will inform on the possibility to shorten intervals between future ICP rounds;

(e) Suggested combining the recommendations of part I and part II in a combined and full set of recommendations in the final FOC report with a view to transform the ICP exercise into a revolving and more frequent exercise, which takes into account users' needs and national statistical capacity as recommended by the Commission at its session of 2014;

(f) Encouraged countries, regional and international organizations not to lose momentum and envisage a next ICP round not too far in the future;

(g) Took note of the draft recommendation included in the first part of the FOC report and considered that:

i. in determining the appropriate number of members participating in the Executive Board of the ICP, a balance should be found between efficiency and representations of stakeholders and, at the same time, assuring transparency in the decision making process; to this end, the Executive Board is encouraged to consider, when appropriate, holding meetings in extended format, inviting other NSOs to attend their meetings that are not members of the Executive Board; and also to consider the participation, upon invitation, of the user community to attend their meeting in extended format;

ii. in determining the membership of the Technical Advisory Group considerations should be made on a purely professional basis, while taking into account the methodological challenges of and representation from national statistical systems at different levels of development;

iii. in developing ICP methodology, as proposed in paragraph 88 of part I of the FOC report, considerations should be given to the complexity in methodology encountered in the ICP 2011 round and the Fundamental

Principles of Official Statistics; Welcomed the initiative of the World Bank to support regional partners with financial and technical assistance to ensure the country and regional capacity built during the 2011 round of the ICP are not lost. Moreover, welcomed the initiative of the World Bank to maintain the ICP team at the Bank in order to ensure continuity and preserve the institutional memory.

Decision 10: Agriculture and rural statistics

The Statistical Commission:

(a) Congratulated the Global Steering Committee on the excellent work done, took note with appreciation of the significant progress made in implementing all key components of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and endorsed the proposed priorities and the way forward;

(b) Recognized the achievements in accelerating the production of cost-effective methodologies, handbooks and guidelines and appreciated the efforts of the regional implementing partners in providing the technical assistance and training needed by countries to respond to national and international data demands;

(c) Expressed its strong support for the efforts made by the Global Strategy in ensuring a better coordination of international initiatives in the field of capacity development for agricultural statistics;

(d) Urged countries and development partners to further support the implementation of the Global Strategy and mobilize the resources needed for achieving the main objectives of the first phase of the programme until 2017;

(e) Asked the Global Strategy to provide long-term and sustainable training to countries and support them in raising the financial resources required to undertake the necessary data collection activities;

(f) Welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on food security, agriculture and rural statistics (IAEG) as an essential forum for the development of international statistical standards in these domains;

(g) Expressed its support for the work done by the IAEG on Food Security, Agricultural and Rural Statistics, commended the efforts to prepare guidelines on the improvement of food consumption data in household budget surveys and requested to provide guidelines and training on the measurement of food Security;

(h) Appreciated the progress made by FAO in preparing the new guidelines for the 2020 World Census of Agriculture in consultation with national and international experts and recommended to strengthen the integration with the Population and Housing Census and the coordination between the Ministries of Agriculture and the National Statistical Offices in its implementation;

(i) Encouraged FAO to finalize the guidelines for the 2020 World Census of Agriculture and the companion handbook for implementation as planned, and invited all countries to participate in the global consultation of Volume 1.