



Asia-Pacific Statistics Newsletter

Issue: First Quarter 2014

31 March 2014

*Welcome to the refreshed Asia-Pacific Statistics Newsletter
We appreciate your comments and suggestions; please email us: stat.unescap@un.org*

In focus

Statistics and the post-2015 development agenda: perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region

Countries from Asia-Pacific and other regions lent their strong support to ESCAP's proposal for the inclusion of a goal on statistics development in the post-2015 development agenda. The call was made at the [45th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission \(UNSC\)](#), the highest statistical forum in the world, which last convened on 4-7 March 2014 in New York. Drawing on lessons learned from the MDGs and looking ahead at the emerging post-2015 development agenda, ESCAP called for the UNSC to take the lead in positioning statistics as a development objective in its own right; proposing measurements of progress towards effective national statistical systems and forming a new global partnership on development data. In their interventions, many countries, including Papua New Guinea speaking on behalf of the Pacific islands and Nigeria on behalf of Africa, agreed with the ideas put

forth in ESCAP's report "Statistics and the post-2015 development agenda: [Perspectives from the Asian and Pacific region](#)" and supported a goal on statistics development. This call was echoed by another Commission document titled "Report of the Friends of the Chair on [Broader Measures of Progress](#)" which suggested, among other things, the inclusion of the development of effective national statistical systems as a target of a post-2015 development agenda in its own right. During the deliberations, countries highlighted the importance of galvanizing targeted support for the development of institutions and infrastructure to produce basic statistics and enable monitoring of new goals and targets.

In this issue

- In focus
- Announcements
- Voices of the region
- Update on areas of work
- Calendar of ESCAP forthcoming meetings
- Staff movement / New faces in ESCAP Statistics Division

Did you know?

- In 2011, just under 20 per cent of the population of Asia and the Pacific, or 743 million people, were living in extreme poverty.
- In 2012, Asia and the Pacific surpassed Europe to become the world's largest trading region

[Do you want to know more?](#)

The Newsletter is available online only.
Subscribe/Unsubscribe [here](#)

For comments and feedback, contact us at: stat.unescap@un.org

Announcements

Update of ESCAP Online statistical database

The [ESCAP online database](#), which includes approximately 630 data series, was updated at the end of March.

Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in the Asia-Pacific

The Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in the Asia-Pacific region will meet during 22-24 April at SIAP, Chiba, Japan. 16 national statistical training institutions and NSOs, regional and international statistical training providers and donor agencies have confirmed attendance at the meeting.

Asia-Pacific Civil Registrars Meeting

The Asia-Pacific Civil Registrars Meeting, co-organized by UNICEF, UNHCR, ESCAP and Plan International, will be held during 28-30 May in Kuala Lumpur. The event aims to establish a regional network of civil registrars to facilitate knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices and innovations.

Special Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) thematic issue of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal

A special CRVS focused issue of the [Asia-Pacific Population Journal](#) is scheduled for publication in July 2014. The issue will provide rich analytical material on CRVS in advance of the November 2014 [Ministerial Conference on CRVS](#).

Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

The [Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#) will take place at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok during 24-28 November. The Conference marks the first time ever that Ministers from Asia-Pacific get together to deliberate on CRVS.

IAOS 2014 Conference

[IAOS 2014](#) will take place in Da Nang, Viet Nam during 8-10 October. The theme of the Conference is "Meeting the demands of a changing world". The conference will cover a broad range of subjects from using new data sources - such as "big data" - to innovative forms of data sharing.

ESCAP Committee on Statistics, Fourth session

The [fourth session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics](#) will take place during 17-19 December at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok.

Voices of the region

"Development partners have to coordinate technical cooperation to optimize resources."

Ms Carmelita N. Ericta, former Interim National Statistician, Philippines Statistics Authority and former Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics

1. What do you feel is the biggest achievement of ESCAP Committee on Statistics during the past five years?

In my opinion, our biggest achievement has been to convince all the governments through the ESCAP Commission to adopt the comprehensive agenda of the Committee on Statistics (CST). This agenda focuses on a broad range of statistical issues under economic, population, social and environment statistics, which are reflected in the strategic goals of the Committee. CST has also managed to stay abreast of the developments in other domains and/or influence them; including, for example, agriculture statistics and vital statistics. I have also been impressed by the high level of participation by countries in the deliberations of the Committee over the past years.

2. What do you see as the greatest challenge ahead for the national statistical systems of developing countries in Asia and the Pacific?

There is a growing demand for statistics in emerging areas, such as climate change, while the resources remain limited and developing countries still strive to catch up with more developed ones. In this context, we do not yet know what the data requirements of the post-2015 development agenda will be and this will be a major area of work for national statistical systems. The development of new skills in the field of data management and analysis is also a priority.



3. What do you see as the greatest challenge ahead for development partners? What role do you see for the Committee on Statistics in improving coordination among development partners; for example in terms of cooperation between global/regional organizations and subregional entities like the ASEAN?

The development partners have competing concerns. For instance, in case of the Philippines, which is a disaster prone country, partners are interested in investing resources in climate change-related work. This means that statistics, as a field, has to compete for attention with other lines of work.

In the area of statistics, the Committee can contribute to improving coordination in statistics development by setting a clear agenda and by enhancing development partners' understanding about the recipients of assistance. Development partners have to coordinate technical cooperation to optimize resources. In addition, the Committee has a role to play in fostering South-South cooperation. In the past, we were merely following what the other regions had set as standards or practices; the Committee is now asserting the Asia-Pacific view on statistics development.

At the subregional level, I see ASEAN as a body that can contribute to the harmonization of statistics in the member countries and for that they should adopt the agenda of the Committee for their work. ASEAN countries have a culture of helping each other and so are developing an ASEAN community in every sense of the word. The role of statistics is key in building the ASEAN community, which could also serve as an example for other subregions. It is important to keep the links to the Committee, as the regional body, in the process of harmonizing statistics at the subregional level.

4. You have passionately advocated for strengthening civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems? Why is this issue so important?

CRVS is important because it affects the lives of people in a very fundamental way. The first right of a child is to have an identity and all the related documents to vital events. There is a wealth of data in CRVS that could be tapped into in order to get vital statistics, in place of conducting very expensive surveys. In short, if we strengthen CRVS we will strengthen national statistical systems.

5. If you could give your successor, as the Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, some recommendations, what would you say?

Provide as much information as you can to countries to enable sharing of experiences and bench-marking based on the successes and mistakes at the national level. Keep the Bureau proactive to make the most of the biennial Committee sessions.

Update on areas of work

Capacity building activities in economic statistics mainly focusing on SNA implementation

- Together with development partners and a [group of experts from the region](#), ESCAP has developed concepts for a training course on GDP estimation based on the 2008 SNA and a high level event for the integrated implementation of macroeconomic statistical standards for Central Asian countries in 2014.
- Conceptual work is ongoing for labour statistics and business registers as capacity building streams under the [Regional Programme on Economic Statistics](#).
- [IMF's project](#) on the Implementation of the SNA and the ICP in Asia-Pacific funded by the Japanese government is extended for another year and will continue through 2015. A total of 14 countries from four subregions are participating in the project. The project activities have so far focused on improving annual and quarterly national accounts estimates, updating and developing or improving price indices. Technical assistance on sectoral accounts and balance sheets has been provided in more developed national statistical systems.

Developing tools for regional capacity building in population and social statistics

- ESCAP and a [group of experts from the region](#) are working with the Philippine Statistics Authority to develop the process for conducting national assessments of capacity in population and social statistics.
- National reviews will form a key part of the regional strategy for capacity building. Feedback and results from a high level forum and workshop held in Manila during 20-21 March, as well as those from a similar review conducted in Bhutan in December 2013, will be used to finalize the review process for use across the region.

Development of a regional core set of gender statistics and indicators

- Draft regional core set of gender indicators is being currently revised as a follow-up to recommendations that emerged from a [regional consultative workshop](#) in November 2013 as well as from other consultations that the Statistics Division has conducted with countries, agencies and experts.
- Further consultations with countries will be conducted over the next few months, before presenting

the draft regional core set to the fourth session of the Committee on Statistics for consideration.

Preparations towards the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

- [Working groups of experts](#) guided the development of a Regional Action Framework which will be presented at the November [Ministerial Conference on CRVS](#). Broader consultations with member States will occur through April and May.
- ESCAP is contributing to the development of an investment case for CRVS, using the Philippines as an example, prior to a [high-level summit on maternal, newborn and child health](#) hosted by the Canadian Government. A [fact-finding mission](#) to initiate this project took place on 13-14 March.
- ESCAP participated in a national strategic planning workshop for CRVS in Pakistan co-organized by WHO and the Pakistan Government during 20-21 March.

Standards and big data dominating the discussion on the modernization of statistical production and services

- ADB and ESCAP initiated the SDMX Capacity Building Initiative by collecting information about SMDX implementations, tools and structures developed by various international organizations. A [discussion](#) was organized during 13-14 March between the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), ADB and ESCAP to discuss the implementation of the initiative. Similar discussion will be organized in Thailand in April.

- ESCAP and partners are working on the organisation of the expert group meeting on [Management of Statistical Information Systems](#) (MSIS 2014) that will be held simultaneously in Dublin and Manila during 14-16 April.

Preparation of the MDG report

- In partnership with ADB and UNDP, the ESCAP Statistics Division is preparing contributions to the 2014/2015 Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report. The report, tentatively scheduled for publication in 2015, aims to highlight remaining as well as emerging regional challenges to the achievement of the millennium development goals.

Institutional capacity building & training

- SIAP and the ESCAP Regional Adviser on Statistics assessed the training needs of Timor-Leste's General Directorates of Statistics (GDS) during 27-31 January. Trainings that will be conducted by SIAP for GDS this year will cover Basic Statistics, Statistical Report Writing and Data Management using MS Excel and CSPro.
- In 2014, [SIAP](#) training will continue to focus on the production of MDG indicators and prepare for the anticipated increase in demand for data for monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda. [Training courses](#) will support capacity building including online courses on the 2008 SNA, full roll-out of training activities under the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, implementing national quality assurance frameworks, core set of gender indicators and vital statistics.

Calendar of forthcoming meetings

Dates	Organizer	Meeting	Venue
14 - 16 April	ESCAP, UNECE, Eurostat, OECD, ADB	Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS 2014)	Manila
22 - 24 April	ESCAP(SIAP)	Organizational Meeting of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia	Chiba
28 - 30 May	ESCAP, UNICEF, UNHCR, Plan International	Asia-Pacific Civil Registrars Meeting	Kuala Lumpur
3 days in June	ESCAP, UNECE, ESCWA	Inter-regional workshop on good practices in gender statistics	TBC
30 June - 4 July	ESCAP	Technical Training on Changes in 2008 SNA affecting GDP and GDP Exhaustiveness	TBC
3 days July	ESCAP	Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group for population and social statistics	Bangkok
2 days August	ESCAP	Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Meeting on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok
2 days August/September	ESCAP	High-level Meeting for Coordinated Implementation of International Standards for Macroeconomic Statistics in North and Central Asia	Vladivostok
24 - 28 November	ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, ADB, Plan International	Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok
15 - 16 December	ESCAP(SIAP)	10th session of Governing Council of SIAP	Bangkok

Dates	Organizer	Meeting	Venue
17 - 19 December	ESCAP	Committee on Statistics, Fourth session	Bangkok

Other meetings

8 - 10 October	International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS), General Statistics Office of Viet Nam	IAOS 2014 Conference - Meeting the Needs of the Changing World	Da Nang
16 - 19 November	International Statistical Institute, Central Bank of Malaysia, Department of Statistics Malaysia, Malaysia Institute of Statistics	ISI Regional Statistics Conference - Statistical Science for a Better Tomorrow	Kuala Lumpur

Staff movement / New faces in ESCAP Statistics Division

Chiara Barbaglio



Chiara joined the Statistics Division's Economic and Environmental Statistics Section as an intern in February. She has been contributing towards the capacity building work in the field of environment statistics. This internship is her first work experience and she is very enthusiastic to spend it at ESCAP.

Chiara is currently in the final steps of a Master of Science in Economics and Social Sciences at Bocconi University in Milan, where she previously completed a Bachelor in Economics and Finance. She is interested in energy statistics and renewable resources.

Ksenia Volosovtsova



Ksenia joined the Statistics Division as an intern in January 2014. She has been assisting the CRVS team in developing advocacy materials and providing technical support. Previously, she held an internship at the International Organization for Migration in Oslo and worked for the Russian Federal Migration Service in the Stavropol Region.

Ksenia is currently pursuing a master's degree in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR) jointly organized by experts from European and African universities. She is interested in migration and development studies, and believes that universal and responsive CRVS systems in Asia and the Pacific region will promote sustainable development and growth.

Virginia Aglietti



Virginia joined the Statistics Division's Economic and Environmental Statistics Section as an intern in February 2014. She has been working on economic statistics with a focus on the available forecasting models for gross domestic product in the region.

Virginia is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Economic and Social Sciences at Bocconi University with previous background in economics and finance. She is interested in econometrics, statistics and their applications to issues in the field of development economics.



A census-taker at work in a field outside Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China



Timor-Leste holds second national village elections under UNMIT supervision