



# Asia-Pacific Statistics Newsletter

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## In focus

### Fourth session of the Committee on Statistics, 25-27 March 2015

Statistical leaders from 34 member States and associate members, as well as representatives from 18 other entities including United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations, participated in the [Fourth Session of the Committee on Statistics](#), from 25 to 27 March, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Under the theme “*Statistics for Development*” the Committee deliberated on the challenges and opportunities arising from the development agenda beyond 2015.

In highlighting the increased demand for statistics likely to result from the emerging development agenda, the Committee: emphasised the continuing relevance of its strategic goals for statistics development in Asia and the Pacific; the need to monitoring progress towards their delivery and the opportunities presented by the data revolution; and the importance of coordinated regional support.

With these issues in mind the Committee decided on a comprehensive range of statistical development issues including: a core set of gender statistics for the region; regional approaches to improving social, disaster and environment statistics; and actions to realize the ‘data revolution’. These will complement other initiatives developed by the Committee on economic statistics, agricultural statistics and civil registration and vital statistics.



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STATISTICS FOR  
DEVELOPMENT



The Committee elected its Bureau for the period 2015-2016, comprising Ms. Aishath Shahuda (Maldives) as the Chair; Mr. Suryamin (Indonesia); Mr. Hyungsoo Park (Republic of Korea) and Mr. Alexander Surinov (Russian Federation) as Vice Chairs, Ms. Teresa Dickinson (New Zealand) as the Rapporteur and Mr. Simil Johnson (Vanuatu) as a member.

## Announcements

### Fifth Session of Organization of Islamic Cooperation Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom)

The [Fifth Session of the OIC-StatCom](#) will be held at the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) Headquarters on 12-14 May, in Ankara, Turkey. The OIC-StatCom aims to create a platform for exchanging experiences and best practices among its 57 Member Countries to effectively build statistical capacities at the OIC level. Consequently, the fifth session will provide a forum for reviewing activities of the OIC-StatCom and discussing various issues including the modernization and transformation of national statistical systems to embrace the post-2015 agenda.

### SDMX Global Conference 2015

The [SDMX \(Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange standard\) Global Conference 2015](#) will take place from 28 to 30 September 2015 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. This is the first time that the global conference is being held in the Asia-Pacific region.



SDMX consists of technical standards, statistical and technical guidelines as well as IT tools to increase efficiencies and reduce reporting burdens associated with the exchange of statistical information. Through its focus on the role that SDMX can play in the modernization of official statistics, the conference is expected to draw participation from IT experts as well as senior officials/statisticians from national statistical offices, central banks and other national data producers.

### EU and India partner on SDMX implementation

In April, the EU and India launched a new cooperation project on ICT-related standardisation. The project which is funded by the EU Partnership Instrument includes a component on SDMX implementation under the technical guidance of Eurostat that focuses on exchange of experiences and preparation for the adoption of such standards in India. For more information on SDMX, visit <http://sdmx.org/>

### UNICEF publication: Unequal at birth: Disparities in birth registration in East Asia and the Pacific

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF EAPRO) launched its EAPRO publication "[Unequal at birth: Disparities in birth registration in East Asia and the Pacific](#)". The report draws attention to some of the reasons that disparities in birth registration have persisted in the region, and suggests ways forward to address these.

### PARIS21 launches a Road Map for a Country-led Data Revolution

PARIS21 launches a [Road Map for a Country-led Data Revolution](#) at the Cartagena Data Festival Tune on 21 April. During the event, PARIS21 will unveil the road map, which sets out a broad programme of action to help developing countries meet data needs related both to monitoring SDG progress as well as to supporting national priorities.

### Launch of a new Lancet series of papers on monitoring vital events - births, deaths and causes of death

The [new Lancet series on monitoring vital events](#) will be launched on 11 May 2015, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The series reviews progress since the seminal 2007 series "Who counts" and builds on the growing momentum for CRVS systems in countries and in the global health and development community.

### Statistics Division has updated the online statistical database

This update includes: GDP and related series (including recalculation of all series using GDP as denominator); infant and child mortality, education, greenhouse gas emission (including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide emissions); natural disasters; government revenues and expenditures, inflation rate, FDI, ODA, personal remittances; and ICT related data series. The database and related data visualization module can be accessed at: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/>.

The next round of updates is planned for October 2015.

### Stats Brief



**March, issue no. 06:** "[Gender equality in research & development in Asia and the Pacific](#)" - presents findings of under-representation of women in the fields of science and research & development. It also gives some explanations as to why there are significant gender disparities in these fields.

**February, issue no. 05:** "[Measuring international migration in a development context](#)" - presents the business case for investing in improving national compilation of international migration statistics.

**January, issue no. 04:** "[Integrated data for integrated policies](#)" - highlights some of the social issues and policy challenges in Asia and the Pacific, some of the links between these issues, and the role of data in making better decisions in future to ensure no one is left behind.

## Voices of the region

*Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives and Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics (CST).*



1. You were elected as the Chair of the fourth session of the CST. What were the most memorable moments or key highlights of that session?

The approval of the proposals of the Bureau on the strategic position and focus and future work of the Committee was definitely a key milestone for me, particularly as the region prepares to meet the demands of the emerging development agenda beyond 2015. Personally, being elected to serve as Chair of the CST was also quite an honour and unforgettable experience; although I must admit that the election process was itself a bit overwhelming and a novel experience for me. It was a gratifying experience to steer the session to a successful conclusion and receive very positive feedback from participants.

2. What are some of the main priorities for building the capacity of national statistical systems in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific?

The main priorities remain the strategic goals specified by Committee at its second session, that the countries of Asia and the Pacific develop the capacity to produce a basic range of population, economic, social and environment statistics; and more adaptive and cost-effective information management systems. These goals articulate the shared aspiration for statistics development of the countries in our region, and will enable production of the data and information required to monitor the development agenda beyond 2015.

Given the varied levels of statistical capacity and resources in Asia and the Pacific, the Committee has a vital role to play with ensuring regional support to countries is well coordinated, effective and efficient, and takes advantage of the opportunities presented by the “data revolution” repeatedly called for at the international level.

This support will include development of methodological guidelines, practical handbooks, standard data collection instruments, advocacy materials and consulting services that support the production high quality statistics in a timely manner.

It will also be important for international organizations to raise the profile of statistics and statistics development to mobilize funding from donors. I hope we will see more and more funds allocated for statistics development in the coming years, be it at the country, regional or global level.

3. What opportunities and challenges will the adoption and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda present in achieving those priorities identified previously?

The SDGs cover a wide range of issues, and that in itself presents a good opportunity to further develop institutional capacity in new areas. As I mentioned previously they also help raise the profile of official statistics and it will be important for national statistical offices to take advantage of this opportunity to advocate for the development of national statistical systems, and for better collaboration and coordination of the production of official statistics.

On the flip side, a number of the proposed indicators are vague and not easy to measure. This will pose serious challenges and require substantial support from the international community (including more technical support and advice) if countries are to compile their own indicators rather than rely on third party estimates. Generating funding for the statistical activities, surveys and censuses and improving administrative statistics to generate the SDG indicators will pose a challenge to countries.

4. What are the most important contributions you would like the Bureau to make over the next two years?

The proposals for strengthening data and statistics that were presented by the Bureau and endorsed by the Committee will certainly be our primary focus, and will require concerted effort and cooperation over the next two years. Prioritization and delivery of the 19 proposals presented in that report as well as the constitution and functioning of supporting expert / steering groups will help ensure delivery of the Committee’s ambitious range of regional initiatives, but will be a substantial challenge. The endorsement and implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015 will also increase the need to support countries, both technically and otherwise. Much of our attention will be focused on ensuring that regional activities in support of national capacity building are coordinated to avoid duplication of effort and to deliver enduring development.

5. To sum up, what message would you want to convey to NSOs, in your capacity as the Chair of the Committee, moving forward?

The road ahead is filled with challenges and opportunities and so I would encourage NSOs to participate fully in the activities being conducted in the region and to continue to advocate for statistics even though it does not get the same high profile as the other line ministries and departments. Together, we can take statistics to a new high!

## Updates

### Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Over sixty participants, including leaders of statistical systems from 14 countries in the Asia and Pacific region that are implementing the Global Strategy, attended the Workshop on Strategic Planning for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) organized by FAO in Bangkok, Thailand, from 17 -19 March 2015. The workshop sought to share the guidelines for the development of SPARS and discuss challenges in integrating agriculture into the national statistical system.

### Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)



The Secretariat for the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Decade received more

than 40 nominations for the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The Fourth Committee on Statistics of ESCAP agreed to recommend a Regional Steering Group consisting of maximum 30 members from countries as well as development partners. The list of suggested members has been submitted to the 71st session of the Commission for endorsement. The first meeting of the Regional Steering Group is tentatively scheduled for 28-30 July 2015. More information on the Regional initiative to '[Get every one in the picture](#)'.

### Core Set of Gender Indicators for Asia and the Pacific

The core set of gender indicators for Asia and the Pacific was approved by the Committee at its Fourth Session in March 2015. The core set aims to serve as a minimum range of gender statistics that all countries in the region can aspire to produce and disseminate, and as a guide for priority setting by national, regional and international entities in enhancing the capacity of national statistical system.

### Disaster-related Statistics

The second meeting of the [Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific](#) took place in Sendai from 16 - 19 March 2015. The meeting reviewed a technical paper on disaster occurrences and immediate, direct impacts of disasters. Based on the recommendations of the paper, a list of priority tasks were identified for completion ahead of the 72nd session of the Commission in 2016. Among those were the establishment of classification systems, methodologies and frameworks to improve the collection of disaster-related statistics.

Reviewing the initial work of the Expert Group in March 2015, the [Committee on Statistics at its fourth session](#) reconfirmed the importance of improving disaster-related statistics, including through developing common methods, standards and frameworks.

### Economic Statistics

The Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics (SGRPES) held its fourth meeting from 23-24 March 2015, in Bangkok. The meeting discussed the progress made



in the first phase of Programme implementation and the work plan for the second phase (2015-2017). RPES has now significantly increased financial resources, especially with funding recently approved by UK Department for International Development (DFiD). In the next phase, the emphasis will be on accelerated implementation of RPES at the national level to improve availability and quality of economic statistics in priority areas, such as national accounts, including the SEEA and business statistics.

### Funding approval from UK Department for International Development (DfiD)

The Regional Programme on Economic Statistics in Asia-Pacific (RPES) is starting its second phase (2015-2017) with significantly increased funding for national implementation. The UK Department for International Development (DFiD) has approved over USD 2 millions of financial support to the Programme spanning four years for the improvement of quality of economic statistics, with a focus on national accounts and business statistics. The funding supports a Resource Facility open to countries in the region to apply with research proposals and a training component. ESCAP will carry out related assessments, technical assistance and training activities in cooperation with development partners and under the general substantive oversight of the RPES.



### Modernization

The Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific ([SAB-AP](#)) convened its fifth meeting on 3 March as a side event to the UN Statistical Commission. Members discussed how to overcome barriers to modernization, especially those related to staff skills, business case presentation and culture change. Members expressed a need for a "clearing house" that collects and disseminates this information. Further, members also discussed a draft advocacy strategy and their involvement in the 2015 SDMX Global Conference.

The [Modernization Working Group \(MWG\)](#) continued its work on the advocacy strategy and preparation of advocacy materials on modernization topics, such as the use cases on Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM).

### PARIS 21 Annual Meeting

PARIS21 convened its [Annual Meeting](#) from 30 March to 1 April, in Paris, France. Themed “making countries fit for the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, the meetings featured discussions on how countries can deliver on the SDGs, including how statistical capacity, as a prospective target area, can be measured and monitored. The proposed Partnership strategy for 2016-2020 prompted particularly lively discussion.

### Population and Social Statistics

The regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific proposed by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Population and Social Statistics was endorsed by the Committee on Statistics, at its fourth session. In pursuit of the implementation of the regional strategy, the Committee requested the establishment of a steering group on population and social statistics. The core set of population and social statistics which comprises 11 domains and 75 statistical themes forms the basis of the vision of the regional strategy.



### Technical Assistance

ESCAP Statistics Division provided technical support to the Statistics Bureau of Bhutan with the revision of its draft questionnaire for population and housing census, to be conducted later in 2015. To ensure the technical soundness of the questionnaire design, technical reviews and support were provided by specialists from various UN agencies including ILO, UNFPA and other Divisions of ESCAP.

Technical support is also being provided to Maldives with the development of the national Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). The Maldives HIES also aims to incorporate key labour force questions in the survey as well as collect data to measure individual level asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective.

### Training

#### Making a Business Case for an Operational Statistical Business Register

The [Regional Course on Statistical Business Register: Making a Business Case for an Operational Statistical Business Register](#) was conducted by SIAP from 26 to 30 January in Perak, Malaysia, in collaboration with the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Statistics Division of ESCAP. The course provided a platform for demonstrating good practices and exchanging experiences in dealing with challenges and issues in the development, maintenance and use of statistical business registers (SBRs) and for developing a business case for supporting an operational SBR suitable to national contexts.

#### Improved capacity in Managing Sample Survey Process in Afghanistan

SIAP conducted the [Country Course on Planning and Management of Sample Survey in Afghanistan](#) that sought to improve the capacity of officials of the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan in managing the Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey. Senior statisticians and survey managers who attended the course concurred that it improved their knowledge and skills in applying internationally agreed principles and standards on survey management in the context of Afghanistan. The course was funded by the UNFPA Country Office of Afghanistan with support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Government of Japan.

## Calendar of forthcoming statistical meetings in Asia and the Pacific

Dates	Organizer	Meeting	Venue
<b>2015</b>			
8-10 April	ADB	Project Inception Meeting for Updating and Constructing the Supply and Use Tables for Selected Developing Member States	Manila, Philippines
15-17 April	UNSD and BPS-Indonesia	<a href="#">Regional Training Workshop on the SEEA Experimental Accounting in Asia and the Pacific</a>	Jakarta, Indonesia
20-24 April	SIAP	Regional Course on Communication and Advocacy for Agricultural and Rural Statistics*	Beijing, China

Dates	Organizer	Meeting	Venue
<b>2015</b>			
20 April - 15 May	SIAP	Training Course on Statistics and Sustainable Development for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*	Quezon City, Philippines
5-8 May	UNSD	<a href="#">Regional Training Workshop for Asia and the Pacific: Supporting developing countries measure progress towards achieving a Green Economy</a>	Hanoi, Viet Nam
12-14 May	SESRIC and IDB	<a href="#">Fifth Session of OIC Statistical Commission (OICStatCom)</a>	Ankara, Turkey
10-17 May	SIAP	Basic statistical methods, Maldives*	On-line
18 May - 26 June	SIAP	Second Group Training programme on Production and Statistical Analysis of Monitoring Indicators in Support of Inclusive Development Policies*	Chiba, Japan
21-22 May	ESCAP	<a href="#">Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2015</a>	Bangkok
25-29 May	ESCAP	<a href="#">71st Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</a>	Bangkok
31 May - 5 June	SIAP	Phase 2: Statistical methods for data analysis (using census data from Maldives)*	Male, Maldives
7-28 June	SIAP	Conduct a thematic analysis (Maldives)*	Distance learning
10-12 June	Pacific Civil Registrars Network, UNICEF and SPC	The Pacific Civil Registrars Network Meeting	Nadi, Fiji
23-25 June ( <i>tentatively</i> )	ESCAP, ECE, and ESCWA	Inter-regional Workshop on Sustainable Communities of Knowledge for Gender Statistics*	Bangkok
29 June - 5 July	SIAP	Reviewing analytical reports (Maldives)*	Distance learning
28-30 July	ESCAP	First meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific <a href="http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics">http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics</a>	Bangkok
2-6 August	SIAP	Finalisation of census analysis (F2F)*	Male' Maldives
3-5 August ( <i>tentatively</i> )	ESCAP and SIAP	Regional Course on Core Set of Gender indicators <a href="http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics">http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics</a>	Chiba, Japan
17 August - 18 December	SIAP	Third Group Training Course in Improving Capability in Producing Official Statistics Relating to MDGs Indicators*	Chiba, Japan
28-30 September	ESCAP and UNSD	<a href="#">SDMX Global Conference 2015</a>	Bangkok
1-2 October	ESCAP and UNSD	The twenty-sixth session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities	Bangkok
12-13 November ( <i>tentatively</i> )	ESCAP, ECE, and ESCWA	Inter-regional Project Closure Workshop: DA Project on Gender Statistics <a href="http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics">http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics</a>	Bangkok
1-2 December ( <i>tentatively</i> )	SIAP	11th Session of SIAP Governing Council <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp/about/governing.html">http://www.unsiap.or.jp/about/governing.html</a>	Chiba, Japan

\* To see more SIAP training activities, please follow this link: [http://www.unsiap.or.jp/news\\_event/news.html](http://www.unsiap.or.jp/news_event/news.html)