



# Asia-Pacific Statistics Newsletter

Issue: Second Quarter 2015

1 July 2015

## In focus

### Regional collaboration for statistics development and the post-2015 development agenda

Halfway into 2015, member States supported by organizations of the United Nations are accelerating efforts to determine both the framework and the mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This simultaneous evolution and the links between the global and regional processes emphasize the vital coordination role of existing regional fora.

- **ESCAP Committee on Statistics**, fourth session (March 2015) agreed to review all regional programmes in light of the capacity requirements for SDG monitoring. The Committee noted the strong link between its work and proposed SDG targets 17.18 and 17.19 ([Link](#)).
- **Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development**, second session (May 2015), positioned as the regional mechanism for follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda, was attended by governments, civil society organizations and the private sector. The discussions on a regional follow-up and review mechanism focused on the importance of strong national statistical systems and debated the establishment of a regional trust fund for statistical capacity and data ([Link](#)).
- **The Interagency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Indicators** met for the first time on 1-2 June in New York. The meeting agreed to establish two work streams to develop a conceptual statistical framework and to analyse inter-linkages among indicators across the proposed sustainable development goals and targets; these two tasks were considered central to ensuring efficient and timely progress of further work to identify a limited list of appropriate indicators for a global SDG monitoring framework. During the meeting, several countries raised the need for regional or sub-regional consultations to assist members of the IAEG-SDG in representing the positions of their countries and respective sub-regions adequately in future meetings of IAEG-SDG ([Link](#)).

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# SDGs

## Announcements

### Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade, 2015-2024



The *Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific* will meet in Bangkok from 28 to 30 July 2015 ([Link](#)).

### World Statistics Day



On 3 June 2015, the United Nations General Assembly resolution was adopted, which designates **20 October 2015**, as the [second World Statistics Day](#). In addition, it was also decided that World Statistics Day will be celebrated on 20 October every 5 years.

### World Statistics Day: Japan

The Statistics Bureau of Japan (SBJ) started a campaign for World Statistics Day 2015.

The SBJ has made a mug displaying the World Statistics Day and SBJ logos, and Japan's Population Census mascots (named "Census-kun" and "Mirai-chan), which will be conducted in October 2015. More information: <https://worldstatisticsday.org/2015/06/05/japan-campaign-kick-off/>

### PARIS21

PARIS21's newsletter for June 2015 is available at <http://www.paris21.org/newsletter>

An info-sheet containing reviews and examples of statistical capacity building will shortly be available at: <http://www.paris21.org/>.

### OECD

The *5<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy* will take place in Guadalajara, Mexico on 13-15 October 2015. Information about the programme, venue, confirmed speakers, side events and exhibition opportunities, is available at the official Forum website: <http://www.oecd-5wf.mx>.

### UNECE

The [decisions taken at the 63rd Plenary Session of the Conference of European Statisticians](#), Geneva, 15-17 June 2015 is now available on the conference website as well as the final text of the [Declaration on the role of National Statistical Offices in SDG monitoring](#).

### Improvement of economic statistics

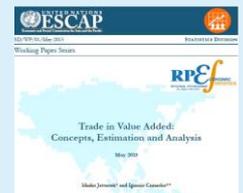


ESCAP encourages countries to submit research proposals for the improvement of economic statistics to the secretariat. For further information, please contact

[stat.unescap@un.org](mailto:stat.unescap@un.org)

### ESCAP begins a new series of working papers

A new series of working papers has been initiated by ESCAP Statistics Division. The title of the first issue is "[Measuring Trade in Value Added: Concepts, Estimation and Analysis](#)". It introduces the topic of Trade in Value Added (TiVA) and presents an initial analysis of TiVA for selected regional ESCAP economies. The paper introduces Global Value Chains (GVCs) and issues for the measurement of trade statistics due to the advent of GVCs. It further presents the TiVA estimation methodology, and outlines the data requirements for estimation. The paper reviews the current initiatives in the realm of TiVA estimation and data availability from the perspective of the Asia-Pacific region. The paper concludes with a TiVA analysis of selected regional ESCAP economies.



### Latest Stats Brief: Growth rates and the SDG process

**April, issue no. 07: "[Average growth rate: Computation methods](#)"** - this issue introduces some of the most common methods to compute average growth rates for time series data, and illustrate the impact of applying different methods for calculating average annual growth rates for GDP per capita and exports of merchandise.



**May, issue no. 08: "[From goals and targets to indicators: Understanding the SDG process](#)"** - this issue introduces the ongoing process of developing SDG goals and targets illustrated through comparison with the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and provides the background and status of the current efforts to develop a supporting global monitoring framework.

### ISI

The International Statistical Institute will organise the 60<sup>th</sup> ISI World Statistics Congress 2015 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during 26-31 July 2015. Online registration is open until 17 July 2015. [More>>](#)

## Voices of the region

*Mr Ramesh Kolli, former member of the National Statistical Commission, India.*



1. You have been involved in supporting national statistical systems in the region for many years. In your opinion, what are the main capacity gaps that hinder the production and dissemination of quality economic statistics?

Capacity gaps vary among the developing countries in the region. These are attributed to lack of (a) sufficient staff, (b) staff skills, (c) ability to produce economic statistics from survey or census data, (d) technical leadership, and (e) frequent turnover of experienced staff. Committed and skilled staff should be retained at least for 10 years in the same branch of economic statistics in the NSO to develop expertise and contribute to their improvement. Lack of budgetary support for data collection programmes is another major constraint.

Experts positioned by international agencies in the countries need to establish a dialogue with the NSO management and other ministries to improve or launch new surveys and access administrative data. These experts also need to provide hands-on support to improve the capacity of staff to produce economic statistics directly from source data, especially administrative data.

2. Have you observed a change of pace at which countries start working towards adopting new international standards and guidelines—especially with the recent experiences with the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) revision and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)?

Yes. Developing countries have different levels of capacity to implement new standards such as 2008 SNA and SEEA, but as I notice, there is keenness to implement these standards more quickly than before. This could be partly due to peer pressure as more and more countries have started working towards implementing the new standards. Several countries did not know which minimum compilations were needed for the implementation of 1993 or 2008 SNA, though the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts provides guidance on this in terms of Minimum Requirement Data Sets (MRDS) and SNA

implementation Milestones. As NSOs slowly become aware of the additional compilations, they feel it is feasible to quickly implement the key recommendations of 2008 SNA.

3. Economic statistics is one of oldest subject-matter departments in many national statistical systems. What are the challenges and opportunities for reforming economic statistics, e.g. through use of alternative sources of data?

Countries should start looking at alternative sources of data more closely, such as administrative data, tax records, and the financial accounts of companies, government accounts and returns filed with regulatory agencies. These data are available free, frequently and with little delay. So far, most countries have been relying on surveys to produce economic statistics. A combination of administrative data and surveys is ideal to produce quality economic statistics. The main challenge here is gaining access to administrative data. NSOs need to establish a mechanism with the concerned ministries for sharing administrative data. NSOs could also establish 'focal points' in different ministries for this purpose, which could meet in NSO once a quarter or year to sort out quality, coverage, timeliness and data sharing issues.

4. In your opinion, what are the key factors for a national statistical system to be able to modernize on a continuous basis?

NSOs should have some independence in its operation and should be provided with an adequate budget. On the part of NSOs, they should have a comprehensive 5-year work plan with annual sub-plans indicating the targets and implementation milestones, presented to the government and public.

The 5-year work plan should indicate the planned surveys and censuses that provide benchmarks; panel surveys to monitor changes in the economy; and finally, access and use of administrative data and production of social, environmental and economic statistics. The work plan should also indicate the plans for human resource development, such as plans for improving skills to produce quality economic statistics from the available data sources and technical assistance required from donor partners.



## Updates

### Adoption of a Resolution on Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Decade, 2015-2024



A [resolution](#) on the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade 2015-2024 was adopted by the

ESCAP Commission at its seventy-first session in May 2015. The resolution reaffirms the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific of November 2014, including the [Ministerial Declaration](#) to “Get Everyone in the Picture” and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. It further calls on member States to implement those outcomes during the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade, 2015-2024.

The resolution was sponsored by the Philippines and co-sponsored by Australia, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam.

#### Constitution of the Regional Steering Group on CRVS

The Terms of Reference and composition of the [Regional Steering Group on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics](#) were endorsed by the ESCAP Commission in May 2015. The Regional Steering Group comprises 30 members and represents a balance of geography and sectors including civil registration, statistics, health and planning. It will provide oversight for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

#### Big data for official statistics



Several national statistical offices from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as ESCAP and

SIAP actively participate in the [Global Working Group on Big Data](#) for Official Statistics (GWG) established by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2014. The work of the GWG progresses in eight topical task teams dealing with various issues on how to use big data for official statistics, as well as exploring the various big data sources such as mobile phones, social media and satellite imagery. The GWG aims to present its work to the wider international statistical community at the second Global Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics scheduled for 20 to 22 October 2015 in Abu Dhabi.

#### Economic statistics

The implementation of the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics progresses through consultations and

scoping missions with priority countries. Following a project workshop held in March 2015, a proposal by Kyrgyzstan for a national study on improving business statistics was

accepted. Cambodia is currently working on a national plan for the improvement of economic statistics within the Regional Programme. ESCAP encourages countries to submit research proposals for the improvement of economic statistics to the secretariat. For further information, please contact [stat.unescap@un.org](mailto:stat.unescap@un.org)



#### Asian Development Bank (ADB) workshops on Supply and Use Tables and Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs)

The Asian Development Bank organized two back-to-back meetings in Bangkok on (1) Supply and Use Tables Framework (22-26 June) and (2) Methodology for the 2015 Update of PPPs (29 June-3 July). Topics covered in the meetings range from conceptual measurement issues in the 2008 SNA to the compilation of GDP through Supply and Use Tables.

#### Empowering disadvantaged communities in ASEAN to promote social inclusion

ESCAP joined UNESCO regional office in Jakarta and Trinity College in Dublin, to implement a project on empowering disadvantaged communities in ASEAN to promote social inclusion.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen national capacities to assess and reform social policy and regulatory frameworks to increase social inclusiveness. The ESCAP component will focus on data needed to support the policy reform process. This will include the design of a generic framework to review data availability and data quality in support of policy reform process as well as assisting participating countries in applying the assessment framework and designing an action plan to strengthen social inclusiveness in selected policy area.

The project will cover three pilot countries (Cambodia, Malaysia and Timor-Leste). The project in Malaysia is coordinated by the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) who organized the first national workshop of national stakeholders and international partners from 8 to 10 June.

#### ESCAP, UNICEF and member States work together to maximise the use of existing data resources to support better policies for children

Over 50 participants from 12 countries participated in a workshop to maximise the use of data to provide

information about the patterns and causes of inequities facing children.

The workshop took place from 23 to 26 June 2015 and was organized by ESCAP and UNICEF in recognition of the need for the SDGs to 'leave no one behind'; and the corresponding need to strengthen the capacity of national statistics institutions to provide comprehensive information about vulnerable groups such as children.



The workshop identified priority national actions and regional support to further improve the use of data - more details can be found [here](#).

## Gender Statistics



In an effort to promote the production and use of the regional core set of gender indicators, the ESCAP is currently supporting the national statistical offices or national women's machineries of China, Mongolia and Thailand in conducting gender-based analysis of their recent time-use data. Each country is expected to conceptualize their research questions, design and implement data analysis, and develop a research report over the coming months.

## MDGs

ESCAP formally launched the 2014/2015 Asia-Pacific MDG Report – the final assessment of regional progress toward the MDGs – on the sidelines of the 71<sup>st</sup> ESCAP Commission. The report, published in partnership with ADB and UNDP, contains two chapters authored by ESCAP which focus on the overall progress made as well as the importance of data and statistics for achieving the next development agenda. Other chapters cover the importance of mobilizing development finance and harnessing emerging technologies.

## Asia-Pacific progress highlighted at global statistics conference

The Asia Pacific component of the [Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics featured prominently in the Strategy's mid-term conference](#), held from 23 to 25 June at FAO headquarters in Rome. The Asia Pacific team detailed its progress on country

participation and trainings, as well as its collaborative success, which includes contributions from implementing partners (ADB, FAO and SIAP).

The Global Strategy and associated Action Plan for 2012-17 is the largest global initiative to improve agricultural and rural statistics in developing countries, particularly for monitoring SDGs.



The mid-term gathering recognized the importance of capacity building through technical assistance and training to support countries to develop national strategic plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS). The need for partners developing and implementing SPARS to build synergies and complement each other's interventions was emphasized. Plans were also announced to create a hub with the support of USAID and World Bank, which will support countries to design and implement integrated agricultural surveys. Partnership with sub-regional organizations was seen as a means to enhance the outreach and resource availability.

## Technical Assistance

### Cambodia

ESCAP participated in a Peer Review of Cambodia National Statistical System which was organised by PARIS21. The mission was an opportunity to consider future collaboration with the Cambodia National Institute of Statistics and discussions were held with the Director General, Ms Hang Lina as well as staff overseeing National Accounts - where projects involving the ESCAP Statistics Division are being developed.

### Maldives

ESCAP conducted a two week mission in the Maldives (7-17 June) to provide guidance to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on the planning and development of their upcoming Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). The mission involved providing assistance on the questionnaire design (including field testing) for the survey, along with general advice on aspects of the survey design (including sampling), in conjunction with colleagues from the ILO and World Bank. Numerous consultations were held with senior colleagues from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism to ensure the survey outputs met user requirements. Ongoing support to finalize the

development of this major survey activity will be provided over the coming months.



*A staff member from the Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, field testing their HIES questionnaire on Gulhi Island in North Male' Atoll.*

with the Philippines Statistical Research and Training Institute, from 20 April to 15 May 2015 in Quezon City, Philippines. The training course enhanced the capacity of the DPRK officials to produce national accounts and economic statistics in accordance with international concepts and standards. As a result of this training, the participants had better knowledge of the statistical implications of the SDGs and statistical standards, frameworks, methods and data sources in producing and compiling quality national accounts statistics following the 2008 SNA framework.

### Research-based Training on Statistical Data Analysis for Maldives

SIAP, in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of the Government of Maldives, conducted a Research-based Training on Statistical Data Analysis, Phase 1: Using Stata for manipulating data from population and housing censuses and Phase 2: Guidelines and Statistical Methods for Census Thematic Analysis, from 26 April to 7 May 2015 and from 31 May to 5 June 2015 respectively in Male, Maldives. These courses are components of a multi-phased, 4-months research-based training that combines face-to-face and online training modalities and aims to produce thematic analyses of the census. The participants of the course were middle-level statisticians in the National Statistical System of the Maldives.

### Strengthening the capacity to analyse disparities in support of inclusive development policies

SIAP conducted the [Second Group Training Programme on Production and Statistical Analysis of Monitoring indicators in Support of Inclusive Development Policies \(PAMID-2\)](#), in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at its premises in Chiba, Japan from 18 May to 26 June 2015. 23 middle-level government statisticians participated in the programme and strengthened their capacity to produce social and economic statistics and indicators, enabling analysis of disparities and monitoring of impacts of inclusive development policies. Participants applied the knowledge and skills acquired to produce an analytical paper on disparities in income, school attendance and literacy, employment and decent work, and child nutrition and health.



### Northern Mariana Islands

ESCAP undertook a workshop at the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) during 22-26 June 2015 to guide key stake-holders of the CNMI Statistics System on the importance of developing a medium term Statistics Plan and discuss options for undertaking a review of their CNMI Statistics System in general. The workshop was attended by over 20 participants across 12 government departments, and gave them the opportunity to present their views of the current status of their Statistical System with group discussions taking place on how this can best be reviewed with the goal of developing a Statistics Plan in the near future. The visit also involved working closely with the Central Statistics Division to improve the production of their Consumer Price Index (CPI).

### Training

#### Fifth Intermediate-Level e-Learning Course on System of National Accounts (2008 SNA)

SIAP conducted the [Fifth Intermediate-Level e-Learning Course on the System of National Accounts \(2008 SNA\)](#): Integrated Transaction Accounts from 1 April to 7 May 2015. The course provided an overview of the main changes in the 2008 SNA relative to the SNA 1993 and their effects, demonstrated methods and techniques for compiling transactional accounts in the 2008 SNA, and explained use of volume measures in national accounts. The 96 participants were junior and middle level government statisticians well versed in the basic concepts of the SNA covered in the basic e-learning course on SNA conducted by SIAP.

#### Enhancing the capacity of the DPRK officials to produce national accounts and economic statistics

A Training Course on Statistics and Sustainable Development for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was conducted by SIAP, in collaboration

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

Dates	Organizer	Meeting	Venue
<b>2015</b>			
6-10 July	SIAP	Regional Course on Statistics on Informality: Informal economy, work and employment <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Chiba, Japan
13-17 July	SIAP	Regional Workshop on Statistical Literacy: Increasing Effective Use of Agricultural and Rural Statistics <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Daejeon, Republic of Korea
11-24 July	SPC	Data Analysis for CRVS course	Guam
28-30 July	ESCAP	<a href="#">First meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific</a>	Bangkok, Thailand
1-14 August	SIAP	Research-Based Training Course on Statistical Data Analysis: Getting Census 2014 Data Edited, Tabulated and Analysed Reviewing preliminary results (Maldives) <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Distance learning
2-6 August	SIAP	Research-Based Training Course on Statistical Data Analysis: Getting Census 2014 Data Edited, Tabulated and Analysed Finalisation of census analysis (F2F) <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Male', Maldives
17 August - 18 December	SIAP	Third Group Training Course in Improving Capability in Producing Official Statistics Relating to MDGs Indicators <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Chiba, Japan
24-26 August	ESCAP, ECE, ESCWA	Inter-regional Workshop on Sustainable Communities of Knowledge for Gender Statistics <a href="http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics">http://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/gender-statistics</a>	Bangkok, Thailand
28-30 September	ESCAP, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)	<a href="#">SDMX Global Conference 2015</a>	Bangkok, Thailand
1-2 October	ESCAP, UNSD	The twenty-sixth session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities	Bangkok, Thailand
1-3 December	Asia Pacific Smart Card Association	11 <sup>th</sup> Asian Government Forum on Electronic Identity <a href="http://www.apsca.org/events/">http://www.apsca.org/events/</a>	Bangladesh
10-11 December	SIAP	11 <sup>th</sup> Session of SIAP Governing Council <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp">http://www.unsiap.or.jp</a>	Chiba, Japan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To see more SIAP training activities: <a href="http://www.unsiap.or.jp/news_event/news.html">http://www.unsiap.or.jp/news_event/news.html</a></li> <li>PARIS21 is maintaining event calendars for Africa, Asia &amp; Pacific, Arab States, and Latin America &amp; Caribbean at: <a href="http://www.paris21.org/events/all">http://www.paris21.org/events/all</a></li> </ul>			