

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Statistical Committee
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019
in the field of statistics****Summary**

The proposed programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics presents the strategy, proposed activities and outputs related to the implementation of the expected accomplishments envisaged under subprogramme 5, “Statistics for evidence-based policymaking”, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019. The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 5 lies on the ESCWA Statistics Division. The overall strategic framework of ESCWA was adopted at the twenty-ninth session of ESCWA, which was held in Doha, from 15 to 18 December 2016.

The Statistical Committee is invited to review the proposed outputs and activities, and make comments and suggestions with a view to focusing statistical activities on key priorities of ESCWA member States.

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SUBPROGRAMME 5. STATISTICS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019

A. OBJECTIVE

1. The objective of subprogramme 5 on statistics for evidence-based policymaking is to transform the regional statistical system into a well-coordinated and functional system of national and regional statistics with the aim of producing and sharing statistical data in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

| Expected accomplishments | Indicators of achievement | | Performance measures | | |
|--|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | 2018-2019 | 2016-2017 | 2014-2015 |
| (a) Improved coordination within the regional statistical system supporting data-sharing and joint statistical capacity development | (i) Increased number of member States adopt agreements and guidelines for a regional statistical system | Target | 18 | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | 15 | – |
| | | Actual | | | 12 |
| | (ii) Increased number of harmonized databases, joint questionnaires and joint data products | Target | 30 | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | 21 | – |
| | | Actual | | | 15 |
| (b) Increased availability of statistics for evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda through implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations | (i) Increased proportion of sustainable development indicators with full disaggregation produced at the national level | Target | 80% | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | 50% | – |
| | | Actual | | | 30% |
| | (ii) Increased number of member States that provide at least 60 per cent of core socioeconomic indicators for the core data sets | Target | 18 | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | 16 | – |
| | | Actual | | | 14 |
| (c) Increased availability of statistical data about the region, based on data produced and disseminated by member States to achieve national and regional goals | (i) Increased number of statistical methodologies, indexes and data sets developed and adopted in the framework of the ESCWA Statistical Committee | Target | 8 | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | 6 | – |
| | | Actual | | | 4 |
| | (ii) Increased number of initiatives developed using statistical methodologies, indexes and data sets | Target | 27 | – | – |
| | | Estimate | | | |
| | | Actual | | | |

C. STRATEGY*

19.36 The Statistics Division is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 5. There is a continued need to improve the quality, relevance, availability and comparability of statistics in the region. Those improvements must be made primarily within the national statistical systems of member States.

19.37 In that context, ESCWA will offer a comprehensive institutional framework to steer the regional statistical development agenda, in cooperation with regional and international partners. It will provide capacity development to member States in collecting, analysing and disseminating statistical data for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Data and statistical enhancements will be critical for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

19.38 Institutional development to improve official statistics will therefore remain the first priority, in order to enable member States to produce quality statistics that meet international standards and recommendations. ESCWA will support member States in improving their institutional set-up and official statistics framework in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. It will also assist them in assessing national statistical systems to define strategies for the development of statistics. This will include developing the technical capacity and skills needed to conduct statistical surveys and censuses, as well as promoting the exchange of knowledge and good practices between member States.

19.39 In the light of the 2030 Agenda and a needs analysis for the development of official statistics in the region, the following thematic areas will be addressed: civil registration and vital statistics; multidimensional poverty; population and housing censuses (2020 round); statistical business registers; national accounts; statistics on trade in services; price statistics; environment statistics; and key development indicators.

19.40 Currently, official statistics do not sufficiently cover the areas of governance and security, statistics in conflict, human rights and well-being. Taking into consideration that the ESCWA technical and resource capacity may not be sufficient to incorporate those new thematic areas, a broader partnership incorporating academia and civil society organizations may be necessary.

19.41 ESCWA will also work with regional and global partners, including the League of Arab States, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), the Gulf Cooperation Council Statistical Centre (GCC-STAT), the regional offices of the United Nations specialized agencies, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO). The partnerships will also involve parties in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, such as the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

19.42 ESCWA is mandated to provide data and analytical services to stakeholders in member States, in partner organizations and within ESCWA, primarily on the basis of data produced by national statistical systems. It will conduct user-needs surveys and satisfaction surveys periodically to assess the impact of the data disseminated and adjust the data collection and dissemination programme accordingly.

* Paragraphs under the heading "Strategy" are numbered 19.36 to 19.46, where 19 indicates programme 19, concerning economic and social development in Western Asia, of the United Nations strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019; and 36 to 46 reflect the sequential numbering of the paragraphs contained in that document which sets out all United Nations programmes. This numbering is retained under the heading "Strategy" in the ESCWA programme of work and the programme of work of each of the seven subprogrammes.

19.43 The Statistics Division is primarily responsible for the quality of data collected and released by ESCWA. It will prepare annual data collection plans to coordinate requests by all ESCWA divisions. Other ESCWA divisions will continue to collect specific statistical data for their analysis and studies.

19.44 ESCWA will work towards formulating consensus-based agreements and guidelines for the harmonization and comparability of official statistics, under the auspices of the ESCWA Statistical Committee. This work will be delegated to advisory groups established for specific priority areas. ESCWA will then work with national statistical systems to implement the new methodologies and guidelines developed through these advisory groups.

19.45 To enhance coherence among regional and international statistical agencies, ESCWA will play an active role in the cooperation and coordination initiatives taken by regional and global statistical systems.

19.46 ESCWA will act as a centre of excellence and a forum for the exchange of views on statistical issues; provide training at the national, subregional and regional levels; work on data quality assurance, estimation techniques and the implementation of international classifications and recommendations in cooperation with national statistical offices; respond to requests for technical assistance; and assist in the exchange of expertise between member States.

D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

2. Subprogramme 5 will achieve its objective and expected accomplishments provided that: (a) member States authorize their institutions to request and use the capacity-building and other resources put at their disposal by ESCWA; (b) there is political acceptance of specific international statistical standards; (c) data are made available from national sources for specific countries/indicators; (d) appropriate technological and publishing tools are available; (e) particular statistical subject matter areas are not affected by large gaps between more and less statistically advanced countries; and (f) regional and international partners remain committed to a coordinated approach to statistical capacity-building and to collecting and sharing statistical data.

E. OUTPUTS

3. During the biennium 2018-2019, the following outputs are proposed under subprogramme 5.
- (a) *Servicing intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget)*
 - (i) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (thirtieth session)
 - Parliamentary documentation: Report of the Statistical Committee on its twelfth session (1).
 - (ii) Statistical Committee
 - a. Servicing the meetings of the thirteenth session of the Statistical Committee (4);
 - Parliamentary documentation: Report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators framework;
 - b. Servicing the meeting of the Bureau of the Statistical Committee (1).
 - (iii) Ad hoc expert group meetings
 - a. The Regional Coordination Mechanism working Group on Sustainable Development Goals data (2);

- b. Technical advisory group on economic statistics (2);
 - c. Technical advisory group on demographic and social statistics (2);
 - d. Expert group on demographic and social statistics (1);
 - e. Expert group on Sustainable Development Goals (1);
 - f. Expert group on emerging issues of official statistics (1);
 - g. The working group of the Statistical Committee (2).
 - h. Expert group on gender statistics (1).
- (b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*
- (i) Recurrent publications
 - a. Arab Society – A Compendium of Social Indicators (1);
 - b. Statistical Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (1);
 - c. Industrial Statistics in the Arab Region (e-Bulletin) (1);
 - d. External Trade Statistics in the Arab Region (e-Bulletin) (1);
 - e. National Accounts Studies of the Arab Region (e-Bulletin) (1);
 - f. Gender in Figures in the Arab Region (e-Bulletin) (1).
 - (ii) *Electronic, audio and video issuances, including films, videotapes, documentary and feature programmes*

Statistical data portal (1).
 - (iii) *Booklets, pamphlets, fact sheets*
 - a. Statistical newsletter (2);
 - b. Ensaf – gender statistics newsletter (2);
 - c. Country profiles (2).
 - (iv) *Technical material*
 - a. Technical document on SDG indicators;
 - b. Data compilation for ESCWA, covering recurrent data products and specific needs of other subprogrammes (2);
 - c. Study on refugee statistics (1);
 - d. Methodological study on economic statistics (1);
 - e. Methodological study on demographic and social statistics (1);
 - f. Glossaries of statistical terms on selected statistical subject-matter areas (1);
 - g. Quarterly inflation outlook (2);
 - h. Technical material on gender statistics (1);
 - i. Technical material on disability statistics (1).
 - (v) *Field projects*
 - a. Development Account project on statistics and data;
 - b. Improving price statistics in Western Asia (extrabudgetary).

Annex

LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

Subprogramme 5. Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

General Assembly resolution

68/261 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Economic and Social Council resolution

2014/31 A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development

ESCWA resolutions

276 (XXIV) Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region

283 (XXV) ESCWA member country compliance with international standards for enhancing national statistical systems

286 (XXV) Gender statistics for equality and empowerment of women

287 (XXV) Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking

297 (XXVI) Arab MDG monitor for societal progress
