



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/7/Report
9 October 2017
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

Twelfth session of the Statistical Committee Beirut, 4-5 April 2017

Summary

The Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twelfth session in Beirut, on 4 and 5 April 2017.

The session agenda contained several items, including actions taken in the field of statistics since the previous session of the Statistical Committee; the role of official statistics in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region; technical cooperation and statistical capacity development in the Arab region; the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics; presentations by national statistical offices evaluating the availability of data related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and a proposed Arab regional action plan on sustainable development data.

The present report sets out the recommendations issued by the Statistical Committee at its twelfth session.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-2	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. RECOMMENDATIONS	3-5	3
A. Recommendations to ESCWA member States	4	3
B. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat	5	5
II. DISCUSSION TOPICS	6-31	6
A. Actions taken in the field of statistics since the previous session of the Statistical Committee	6-15	6
B. Role of official statistics in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Development in the Arab region	16-26	8
C. Technical cooperation and statistical capacity development in the Arab region	27-28	9
D. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics.....	29-30	10
E. Date and venue of the thirteenth session of the Statistical Committee.....	31	10
III. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE	32	10
IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION	33-40	10
A. Date and venue	33	10
B. Opening	34-36	10
C. Attendance	37	11
D. Election of officers	38	11
E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work	39	11
F. Documents	40	11

ANNEXES

<i>Annex I.</i> List of participants	12
<i>Annex II.</i> List of documents	15

Introduction

1. The Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twelfth session in Beirut, on 4 and 5 April 2017, pursuant to resolution 179 (XVI) of 2 September 1992, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1993/2 of 2 February 1993, concerning the establishment of a statistical committee at ESCWA, and in accordance with the recommendations issued at the eleventh session of the Statistical Committee, held in Amman from 4 to 5 February 2015.
2. The present report sets out the main recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its twelfth session. The Committee adopted this report at its closing session, held on 5 April 2017.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

3. At its twelfth session, the Statistical Committee made the following recommendations to member States and the ESCWA secretariat.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA MEMBER STATES

4. The Statistical Committee issued the following recommendations to ESCWA member States:
 - (a) Welcome progress made in implementing the recommendations adopted at the eleventh session, and request the secretariat to continue following up with member States on unimplemented recommendations;
 - (b) Welcome the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, as presented in document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/6, focusing on the statistical challenges facing conflict-affected countries, poverty statistics, measuring poverty lines, and multidimensional poverty;
 - (c) Formulate new national strategies to strengthen statistics and benefit from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an incentive for their use, based on guidelines developed under the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21);
 - (d) Welcome the proposed Arab regional action plan for sustainable development data and its six strategic areas;
 - (e) Urge member States to provide the secretariat with the statistical indicators agreed at the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics for the Arab Countries, held in Tunis on 17 and 18 October 2016;
 - (f) Document the experiences of population censuses in Arab countries, benefit more from census implementation methods and tools used regionally and globally, increase the number of trained census staff, conduct post enumeration surveys, evaluate census results using multiple methods, use census results in research and planning, and strengthen relationships between census data producers and users;
 - (g) Affirm the importance of national coordination between statistical offices, institutions responsible for civil registration and vital statistics and all actors involved in producing and disseminating vital statistics, and build the capacity of civil registrars, especially in terms of classifying causes of death, to improve the coverage and quality of civil registration systems;
 - (h) Highlight the need to collect, process, disseminate, publish, and evaluate statistics on refugees and displaced persons to ensure reliability and accuracy of official statistics, taking into account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

(i) Encourage countries to implement the System of National Accounts 2008, integrated economic statistics, infrastructure, and economic indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

(j) Strengthen coordination between statistical offices, finance ministries, central banks and other government bodies to facilitate the use of financial reports as data sources for preparing national accounts, in line with confidentiality requirements;

(k) Expand gross domestic product (GDP) measurements to include small and medium enterprises and the informal sector, by linking it to statistical business registers based on tables designed for that purpose, so as to achieve certain features such as improved economic data consistency at the national level;

(l) Collect and publish short-term economic statistics, benefiting from ESCWA support and successful international and regional experiences, in accordance with international recommendations and standards;

(m) Develop and update work on price statistics, support the implementation of the International Comparison Programme, and incorporate its activities in national statistics action plans;

(n) Develop infrastructure for economic statistics by employing information technology, applying global economic classifications, using statistical business registers, and updating economic survey frameworks and linking them to other surveys to ensure consistency among them and compatibility with the System of National Accounts 2008;

(o) Develop SDG-related statistics on the environment and natural resources by coordinating with national partners and relevant organizations, and use geographic information systems (GIS) and global frameworks, such as the Central Framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting;

(p) Fill data gaps, improve the production and publication of national consolidated data on SDG indicators, strengthen comparability and conciliation between national and global data, and document and disseminate metadata by establishing knowledge exchange platforms and using effective reporting mechanisms;

(q) Welcome progress by the regional working group, comprising ESCWA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the League of Arab States, in developing a set of sustainable development indicators based on the International Conference on Population and Development, in coordination with national population councils and committees, and in identifying 39 indicators reflecting the integration of population dimensions to monitor progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level;

(r) Study the potential benefits of the data revolution and the volumes of new data possessed by the private sector to assist national statistical offices in filling data gaps in official statistics, limit costs, guide efforts, and reduce the time it takes to prepare more detailed data, taking into account the risks and challenges resulting from using and processing new data sources, especially regarding data privacy and confidentiality;

(s) Confirm the importance of using information and communication technology and geospatial technology to develop information and data collection and analysis, and include geospatial data along with social, economic and other development data in official statistics;

(t) Update and develop national statistical systems, as called for by the Arab Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics, to strengthen global, regional and national statistical systems, and build their capacity to respond more efficiently and effectively to new policy needs, especially the 2030 Agenda and the role of statistics in measuring and monitoring the SDGs;

(u) Commend the secretariat's efforts in linking normative activities it has undertaken, including studies and research papers, with advisory services it provides to member States, and with its efforts to build

consensus on methods to deal with challenges facing the region through the results of its studies, research and meetings;

(v) Reaffirm the importance of providing the secretariat with the data required to prepare studies, so that it can base them on national statistics.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

5. The Statistical Committee made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Provide support to member States in collecting, processing, publishing, and evaluating refugee statistics, and continue providing technical coordination and cooperation in the field of statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Refugee Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, and national statistical offices in member States; facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills; and transfer new guidelines and tools developed by the International Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics for ESCWA member States;

(b) Continue building country capacity to implement the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, and develop vital statistics from civil registers in member States in collaboration with relevant organizations;

(c) Continue building country capacity to implement the System of National Accounts 2008, and supporting economic statistics and related fields, especially in the area of developing supply and use tables to improve GDP estimates by enhancing estimates of informal activities, and to increase benefits from household surveys in this field;

(d) Continue updating and developing the various areas of price statistics and purchasing power parities, and build country capacity in these fields and in short-term statistics and economic statistics on agriculture and tourism activities;

(e) Strengthen partnerships with the United Nations Statistics Division, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the League of Arab States, Statistical Centre of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC-Stat), United Nations programmes on building national statistical capacity, UNFPA and the United Nations Development Programme, and benefit from the outcomes of statistical forums and events held in the Arab region to unify efforts, such as the Doha Declaration on a Data Revolution in the Arab Region and the Riyadh Declaration: A New Era of Strategic Partnership;

(f) Support member States' efforts in developing economic statistical infrastructure by applying economic classifications, collecting statistics on international trade in services, using statistical business records, and implementing targeted activities in this field;

(g) Develop an Arab framework of SDG indicators, taking into account regional priorities and thematic frameworks, monitor the availability of national data including classified data, report on progress for all, and continue providing technical coordination and cooperation in the field of data collection and publication for SDG indicators and present reports on the findings to the Statistical Committee;

(h) Complete the regional action plan on sustainable development data and its six strategic areas, covering building capacity in the region and providing technical services to countries, in collaboration with regional and international organizations;

(i) Confirm the usefulness of official websites belonging to national statistical offices in obtaining data;

(j) Support countries in collecting and disseminating SDG-related statistics on the environment and natural resources, and use the Central Framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting;

(k) Develop work methodologies for statistics production in crisis-affected countries, and provide training programmes to meet their special needs;

(l) Complete the “Transformation agenda for the Arab region”, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, the League of Arab States, Islamic Development Bank, GCC-Stat, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, and other international and regional partners.

II. DISCUSSION TOPICS

A. ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS SINCE THE PREVIOUS SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

6. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3 to the Statistical Committee. This item comprised the following four subitems: (a) with reference to document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part I) containing the report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics in the Arab Region, held in Tunis on 17 and 18 October 2016, and the meeting’s outcomes and recommendations; (b) with reference to document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part II) containing the report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics in the Arab Region, held in Cairo, on 9 and 10 November 2016, and the meeting’s outcomes and recommendations; (c) with reference to document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part III) setting out the statistics-related activities undertaken by ESCWA under its programme of work during 2015 and 2016; and (d) with reference to document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part IV) on implementing the recommendations made by the Committee at its eleventh session.

1. *Report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics in the Arab Region*

7. Document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part I) contained the report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics in the Arab Region, held in Tunis on 17 and 18 October 2016. The report set out the meeting’s outcomes and recommendations and a summary of the discussions. The report also contained the Group’s draft terms of reference, and a list of primary and secondary indicators. The Committee was requested to review the report, and consider adopting the draft terms of reference and proposed list of indicators.

8. The ensuing discussion covered several points, notably the importance of cooperation between ESCWA and its member States in the field of collecting and disseminating data for the statistical indicators agreed at the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics in the Arab Region; documenting census experiences through Arab national statistical offices, benefiting from regional and global experiences, strengthening the capacity of census staff, conducting post enumeration surveys and evaluating census results using various methods, evaluating the use of census results in research and planning, and strengthening dialogue between census data producers and users; coordinating between statistical offices and institutions responsible for civil registers and vital statistics, and all national stakeholders involved in the production and dissemination of vital statistics; providing continual and comprehensive training to civil registry staff, and classifying causes of death to improve the coverage and quality of civil registration systems; and the importance of collecting, processing, producing, disseminating, and evaluating statistics on refugees and displaced persons to ensure reliability and accuracy of official statistics, taking into account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

9. Participants requested the secretariat to continue its regional work in the field of population censuses; provide support to member States in collecting, producing, disseminating, and evaluating refugee statistics; continue offering technical coordination and cooperation in the field of statistics on refugees and displaced populations in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Refugee Organization and national statistical offices; facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills; transfer new guidelines and tools developed by the International Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics for ESCWA member States.

2. Report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics in the Arab Region

10. Document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part II) contained the report of the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics in the Arab Region, held in Cairo on 9 and 10 November 2016. The report set out the outcomes and recommendations of the meeting and summarized discussions addressing priorities and areas of collaboration; the implementation of international standards and methodologies related to the System of National Accounts 2008; international classifications; knowledge sharing; and a proposed core set of economic indicators including SDG indicators.

11. The discussions focused on several issues, including the importance of evaluating economic statistical priorities to follow up on the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008, integrated economic statistics, statistical infrastructure, and SDG-related economic indicators; enhancing coordination between statistical offices, finance ministries, central banks, and other government bodies to facilitate the use of financial statements as data sources for preparing national accounts, in line with confidentiality requirements, to develop statistical business registers based on tax registers, and to harmonize between accounts of the calendar year and the fiscal year; expanding GDP measurements to include small and medium enterprises and the informal sector by linking it to business registers and supply and use tables and developing regional accounts, updating price statistics, supporting the implementation of the International Comparison Programme and incorporating its results in national statistical programmes; collecting and disseminating short-term economic statistics benefiting from the support and best practices of ESCWA at international and regional levels, in line with international standards and recommendations; and developing SDG-related statistics on the environment and natural resources by coordinating with national partners and relevant organizations, and using GIS and global frameworks, such as the Central Framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.

12. The Statistical Committee requested ESCWA to enhance countries' capacity in implementing the 2008 System of National Accounts and supporting statistics, such as supply and use tables, price statistics, current and constant price estimates, short-term statistics, and improving estimates related to output in the informal sector, agriculture and tourism. It further requested ESCWA to support member States' efforts in developing economic statistical infrastructure by applying economic classifications, using statistical business registers and implementing targeted activities in this field.

3. Implementation of statistics-related activities under the programme of work for 2015 and 2016

13. The representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part III) and informed participants of key activities and accomplishments of the ESCWA Statistics Division since the eleventh session of the Statistical Committee. The representative of the secretariat reviewed publications, reports and technical material, capacity-building activities, and technical advisory services offered to member States on managing statistical systems, economic statistics and national accounts, and demographic, social and gender statistics.

4. *Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its eleventh session*

14. The representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part IV) on recommendations made to the ESCWA secretariat and member States at the eleventh session of the Statistical Committee, held in Amman on 4 and 5 February 2015. The document also set out the procedures and activities implemented by the secretariat pursuant to those recommendations in 2015 and 2016, and the measures taken to apply unimplemented recommendations issued before the eleventh session.

15. At the close of the discussions on implementing statistical activities set out in the programme of work for 2015 and 2016 and on implementing recommendations made by the Committee at its eleventh session, the Committee welcomed progress in implementing recommendations adopted at the eleventh session and requested the secretariat to continue following up with member States on unimplemented recommendations.

B. ROLE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION

1. *Data availability on the Sustainable Development Goals*

16. The representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/4(Part I), and informed participants of the analytical assessment of data availability in the Arab region for monitoring and reporting on the 17 SDGs, based on the Global SDG Indicators Database. The document also established a baseline for tracking indicators to monitor progress made in data availability, dissemination and communication practices. The document set out recommendations and a work plan at the national and regional levels to support increasing demand for data in the Global SDG Indicators Database, in line with the commitment made by countries at the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission to monitor and report on the SDGs.

17. The ensuing discussion focused on the importance of intensifying country efforts in developing national SDG frameworks compatible with international and regional SDG frameworks; filling data gaps, including classified data, to ensure inclusive benefit for all, and improve comparability and harmony between national and global data; improving the production and dissemination of national consolidated data, and documenting and disseminating metadata by establishing knowledge-exchange platforms, using effective reporting mechanisms and identifying an evaluation mechanism; and strengthening coordination in national statistical systems and building national statistical capacity.

18. The Statistical Committee requested ESCWA to participate in developing an Arab SDG framework, taking into account regional priorities and thematic frameworks, monitoring national data availability including classified data, reporting on progress that leaves nobody behind, and submitting relevant reports to the Statistical Committee; to play a key role in developing a regional action plan, building capacity in the region, harmonizing data from national and international sources, providing technical services to countries with support from regional commissions, regional organizations and other offices, and strengthening communication between national and regional institutions; to provide the necessary resources to standardize statistical policies and ensure coordination to implement activities at the regional and global levels; to implement the 2030 Agenda; and to support countries in collecting and disseminating SDG-related statistics on the environment and natural resources, and global frameworks such as the Central Framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.

2. *Assessments by national statistical offices of national data availability*

19. Representatives of national statistical offices gave presentations on statistical work and the collection and dissemination of data, as follows.

20. The representative of the State of Palestine considered the joint political decision from the public and private sectors, civil society and experts on incorporating SDG indicators in their action plan. He stressed the importance of including the SDGs in development plans under the Council of Ministers. He reviewed the work of the Central Bureau of Statistics in preparing the national strategy of the 2030 Agenda, providing indicators, evaluating data sources and identifying indicators and measurement mechanisms. He also considered the challenges faced by the Central Bureau, including the high number of SDG indicators, resulting in gaps in their provision and therefore resorting to administrative registers or surveys to fill those gaps.

21. The representative of Egypt tackled the nationalization of the SDGs in his country and their translation into implementable national strategies. He said that 42 per cent of indicators could be provided with their sources. The national statistical office was preparing a report on sustainable development indicators, to be presented to the Planning Ministry for the purpose of developing a national strategy. He considered the challenges facing Egypt regarding SDG indicators, including data gaps, especially in population data (gender and age), and gaps in standards, and the need to use administrative and business registers to fill data gaps. He requested all United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, especially ESCWA, to provide technical support and capacity-building to the statistical office, and identify metadata.

22. The representative of Saudi Arabia considered the efforts made to provide data for the SDG indicators, and the challenges facing national statistical offices in providing them, such as a lack of funding and expertise. He said that a transformation was underway in statistical offices with regard to the way statistical work was carried out, including improvements in data collection mechanisms, the use of administrative records that provided 90 per cent of SDG indicators and coordination between statistical offices and relevant ministries.

23. The representative of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries stressed the need for agreement in identifying challenges and finding solutions, developing national plans consistent with the 2030 Agenda and reaching consensus on metadata.

24. The discussion focused on the importance of assessing national statistical systems and strategies to enhance statistics, and conduct comprehensive evaluations of national statistical offices to facilitate the formulation of national strategies; and the need to develop new national strategies to enhance and develop statistics in view of the 2030 Agenda, based on guidelines for advancing existing statistic strategies under PARIS 21.

3. Proposed Arab regional action plan for sustainable development data

25. The representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/4(Part II), based on the Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session (New York, 7-10 March 2017), which outlined the proposed Arab regional action plan for sustainable development data.

26. The Committee welcomed the proposed Arab regional action plan for sustainable development data and its six strategic areas, and the establishment of a steering committee focusing on strengthening partnerships and coordination within the Arab region and, in collaboration with ESCWA, preparing the final draft of the action plan and a roadmap for its implementation, building on experiences from other regions.

C. TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND STATISTICAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION

27. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/5 covering advisory services, workshops, fellowship programmes, and capacity-building activities that ESCWA is expected to undertake in the field of statistics over the biennium 2018-2019.

28. The Committee requested the secretariat to strengthen partnerships with the United Nations Statistics Division, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Centre of the International Monetary Fund, and United Nations programmes to build national capacity in economic statistics; and to continue technical coordination and cooperation in collecting and disseminating SDG indicators, endorse the indicators adopted by countries on population and development in collaboration with UNFPA, and enhance cooperation between ESCWA and related organizations to improve the collection of SDG-related indicators.

**D. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019
IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS**

29. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/6 on the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics for evidence-based policymaking.

30. Participants welcomed the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics for evidence-based policymaking.

E. DATE AND VENUE OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

31. The thirteenth session of the Statistical Committee will be held at the United Nations House in Beirut, in November 2018. Kuwait will chair the session, based on the rotation in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations.

**III. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT THE TWELFTH
SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

32. At its closing session, held on 5 April 2017, the Statistical Committee adopted the draft report of its twelfth session.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. DATE AND VENUE

33. The Statistical Committee held its twelfth session at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 4 and 5 April 2017.

B. OPENING

34. Mr. Mohammed Omari, Acting General Director of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, representative of the State of Palestine and chair of the eleventh session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee, opened the session. He welcomed participants, commending member States' cooperation with ESCWA in coordinating and consolidating efforts to strengthen joint statistical work between all stakeholders. He also thanked ESCWA for its support to member States. He reviewed some of the Committee's past achievements, notably, forming an advisory group on social statistics and an advisory group on economic statistics, which constituted two key references for developing statistical work, and promoting the use and dissemination of data in accordance with the latest standards. He also considered regional preparations for the 2020 census round, and the importance of using technology in the census to collect better quality data. He concluded by saying that the 2030 Agenda and the SDG indicators had increased statistical offices' responsibilities and demand for ESCWA support to member States to evaluate and advance statistical work and national statistical offices.

35. Mr. Juraj Riecan, Director of the ESCWA Statistics Division, made a statement on behalf of the secretariat. He welcomed participants and stressed the importance of continual and effective cooperation between member States and ESCWA on statistical issues related to supporting national statistical offices, applying new work methodologies and standards to measure social justice, and collecting and disseminating targeted and reliable statistical data, especially in view of recent political events in the Arab region. He also mentioned increasing demand for information under the co-called ‘data revolution’, and other issues including increasing disparities within societies, unmet needs and poverty.

36. Mr. Sultan Ali al Kuwari, the representative of Qatar and chair of the twelfth session of the Statistical Committee, welcomed participants, commending ESCWA efforts to support statistical capacity in member States and to promote joint statistical work, especially regarding the 2030 Agenda. He expressed his hope that the session would make recommendations that served member States.

C. ATTENDANCE

37. The session was attended by representatives of 13 ESCWA member States, the United Nations Statistics Division, various United Nations regional entities and programmes, and other regional and Arab organizations. The list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

38. Rule 18 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ESCWA states: “Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations”.* In accordance with this rule, the representative of Qatar chaired the session. Participants elected the representatives of Kuwait and the State of Palestine as vice-chairs, and of Egypt as rapporteur.

E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

39. At its first meeting, the Statistical Committee adopted the provisional agenda of its twelfth session, as contained in document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/L.1. Under the item “other matters”, it included a request to hold a coordination meeting before the forty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. At the same meeting, the Committee approved the organization of work of the session as contained in document E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/L.2.

F. DOCUMENTS

40. A list of the documents presented at the twelfth session of the Statistical Committee is set out in annex II to the present report.

* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, and Yemen.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER STATES

Egypt

Ms. Huda Mustafa Ateiah
Director General of the Department of
International Cooperation
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and
Statistic (CAPMAS)

Mr. Taher Hassan Saleh
Head of the Central Administration of Population
Statistics and Services
CAPMAS

Ms. Mouchera Achraf Anwar Abdelhay Karara
Senior Economic Researcher
Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and
Administrative Reform

Iraq

Mr. Dheyaa Awad Kadhim
Chairman
Central Organization for Statistics and Information
Technology

Ms. Aqood Hussein al Saad
Assistant Director General
Ministry of Planning/The Executive
Administration for Population Policy

Jordan

Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Ahmad Almomani
Head of Population Statistics Division
Department of Statistics

Ms. Ikhlas S.E. al Aranki
Assistant Director General
Department of Statistics

Kuwait

Ms. Khaldah al Kharraz
Director of the Department of Economic Statistics,
Social Trade, Agricultural, Education and Services
Central Statistical Bureau

Ms. Nouf al Khalifi
Head of Department of Vital Statistics
Central Statistical Bureau

Lebanon

Ms. Najwa Yakoub
Head of the National Coordination and Accounting
Department
Central Administration of Statistics

Ms. Lara Badre
Sociologist
Central Administration of Statistics

Mauritania

Mr. Mohamed el Moctar Ahmed Sidi
Director General
National Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Elyass Didi
Director of Demographic and Social Statistics
National Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Moctar Salem el Mouna
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdullah M. al Batil
General Director
Central Department of Statistics and Information

State of Palestine

Mr. Mohammed Omari
Acting General Director
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Ayman Sabri Dwekat
Director of Aid Management
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Ahmad Ateiah
Head of Governance Statistics Division
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Qatar

Mr. Sultan Ali al Kuwari
Assistant Under-Secretary of Statistics Affairs
Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

Qatar (continued)

Mr. Mohamed Saeed al Mohannadi
Director of Population and Social Statistics
Department
Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

Sudan

Mr. Mohamed el Alim Abdelghani
Central Bureau of Statistics

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Ihsan Amer
Director
Central Bureau of Statistics

Tunisia

Mr. Hedi Saidi
Director General
National Institute of Statistics

Mr. Nasreddine Dridi
National Institute of Statistics

Yemen

Mr. Tareq Yahya Alkebsi
Deputy Assistant General
Central Statistical Organization

B. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

Statistics Division

Ms. Linda Hooper
Statistician

Ms. Francesca Perucci
Chief
Statistical Services Branch

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Ms. Hala Yousef
Regional Population Policies and Data Adviser
Arab States Regional Office (ASRO)

United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office

Ms. Kristine Najjar
SDG Mainstreaming Support Officer

World Health Organization

Mr. Henry Doctor
Technical Officer, Health Information and
Statistics

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) -
West Asia Office

Mr. Abdelmenam Mohamed
Regional Officer, Science-Policy Interface
Division of Early Warning and Assessment
(DEWA), West Asia

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Mr. Yves Perardel
Senior Statistician, Data Production and Analysis
Unit (DPAU)
Data Production and Analysis Unit (DPAU)
Department of Statistics

United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)

Mr. Donatien Beguy
Human Settlements Officer, Demographer

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States

Ms. Katja Schaffer
Human Settlements Officer

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Regional Office

Ms. Farah Choucair
Project Manager, Arab Development Portal and
Social Cohesion Project,
Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle
East and North Africa Regional Office
(MENARO)

Ms. Roumiana Gantcheva
Regional Chief of Monitoring and Evaluation

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR)

Ms. Yunesti Handayani
Programme Officer

Mr. Jad Ghosn
Information Management Officer

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the
Arab States - UNESCO Cairo

Mr. Abdelaziz Zaki
Science National Professional Officer

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the
Arab States

Mr. Charles Obiero
Education Economist/Statistician

UN Women

Ms. Maryse Guimond
Programme Manager

C. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statistical Centre for the Gulf Cooperation Council
for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-STAT)

Mr. Salah Nasser al Muzahmi
Director of Research and Development Indicators
Department

Statistical, Economic and Social Research and
Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

Mr. Atilla Karaman
Statistics and Information Department

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Item	Symbol
Information note		E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	3	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/L.1
Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/L.2
Actions taken in the field of statistics since the previous session of the Statistical Committee	4	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3
Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics	4 (a)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part I)
Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics	4 (b)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part II)
Implementation of statistics-related activities under the programme of work for 2015 and 2016	4 (c)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part III)
Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee	4 (d)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/3(Part IV)
Role of official statistics in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Development in the Arab Region	5	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/4
Data availability on the Sustainable Development Goals	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/4(Part I)
Proposed Arab regional action plan for sustainable development data	5 (c)	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/4(Part II)
Technical cooperation and statistical capacity development in the Arab region	6	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/5
Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of statistics	7	E/ESCWA/SD/2017/IG.1/6