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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Statistical Committee
Thirteenth session
Beirut, 29-30 January 2019



Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

Follow-up issues

4. Activities implemented in the field of statistics:
 - (a) Follow-up on recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its twelfth session and previous recommendations;
 - (b) Activities under the programme of work;
 - (c) Technical cooperation activities;
 - (d) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics;
 - (e) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics.

Technology for statistics: opportunities and implications

5. Prospects of innovation and technology in official statistics.
6. Round-table discussion: Use of technology in official statistics – ethical considerations.

Statistics and the Sustainable Development Goals

7. Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data: progress in implementation.
8. Programme on Statistics and Data: overview and way forward.
9. Proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of statistics.
10. Round-table discussion: Vision and strategic directions for ESCWA work in the field of statistics for the period 2020-2025.
11. Coordinating a regional position on the topics of discussion at the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

12. Date and venue of the fourteenth session of the Statistical Committee.
13. Other matters.
14. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its thirteenth session.

ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the session

The thirteenth session of the Statistical Committee will begin at 10 a.m. on 29 January 2019 at the United Nations House in Beirut.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission 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. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers”.* The Committee shall elect two vice-chairs and a rapporteur from its member representatives.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, which apply to subsidiary bodies, states: “At the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed his/her duties in accordance with rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda”. Pursuant to that rule, the Committee will review the provisional agenda for the current session as set out in document E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/L.1. It will also review the proposed organization of work as set out in document E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/L.2. The Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted or in amended forms.

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

Follow-up issues

4. Activities implemented in the field of statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3)

Under this item, the Committee will discuss four topics with reference to the following documents:

(a) Follow-up on recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its twelfth session and previous recommendations (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3(Part I))

At its twelfth session, held in Beirut on 4 and 5 April 2017, the Statistical Committee issued recommendations to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The document presents progress in implementing those recommendations.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the measures taken by the secretariat to follow up on those recommendations, and to report on steps taken by member States to implement the recommendations made to them.

(b) Activities under the programme of work (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3(Part II))

The document summarizes the activities undertaken by the secretariat and key achievements in the field of statistics since the twelfth session of the Statistical Committee. It reviews the publications, reports and technical material prepared under the ESCWA work programme in the field of economic statistics and national accounts, demographic and social statistics, and gender statistics.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of achievements in those areas and comment thereon.

(c) Technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3(Part III))

The document provides an overview of technical cooperation activities, including advisory services, workshops and capacity-building activities, undertaken by the secretariat since January 2017 in the field of statistics.

The Statistical Committee is invited take note of the document, make comments thereon and provide guidance on technical cooperation activities.

(d) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics
(E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3(Part IV))

The document summarizes the work outcomes of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics, which was formed by the Statistical Committee.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document and discuss the recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Group.

(e) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics
(E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/3(Part V))

The document summarizes the work outcomes of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics, which was formed by the Statistical Committee.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document and discuss the recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Group.

Technology for statistics: opportunities and implications

5. Prospects of innovation and technology in official statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/4)

The document presents the opportunities and implications related to technological development in the field of official statistics. Those developments have caused a revolution in the availability of data and information, especially through geographic information systems, geospatial systems, Earth monitoring and the use of alternative data sources, such as big data and remote data storing and archiving technology, all of which can support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document, make comments thereon, and guide the secretariat's work in that regard.

6. Round-table discussion: Use of technology in official statistics – ethical considerations (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/CRP.1)

Wider use of technology and alternative data sources has resulted in the involvement of new actors in official statistical activities. Those new actors may not necessarily be committed to upholding the ethical principles of official statistics, existing statistical regulations and related statistical legislation. The round-table discussion will address the principal ethical implications resulting from technology use in official statistics, so as to reduce related risks and develop necessary control measures.

The Statistical Committee is invited to review the main national challenges faced in that regard.

Statistics and the Sustainable Development Goals

7. Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data: progress in implementation (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/5-E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/6/Rev.1)

At its twelfth meeting, the Statistical Committee adopted the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data to support national statistical offices in following up on progress towards the SDGs. The document presents progress in implementing the Arab Regional Action Plan.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document and make recommendations to advance the Arab Regional Action Plan.

8. Programme on Statistics and Data: overview and way forward (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/6)

The document presents the key components of the Programme on Statistics and Data, aimed at building statistical capacity to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The document sets out the results of the Programme's mid-term evaluation and activities to be implemented over the next three years.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of progress made under the Programme and to provide guidance on the way forward.

9. Proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/7)

The document presents the proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of statistics, prepared under ESCWA subprogramme 5 on statistics for evidence-based policymaking. The proposed ESCWA programme plan for 2020 was presented to the Executive Committee, which adopted it at its fifth meeting held in Beirut on 18 and 19 December 2018. The document thus sets out the proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of statistics as adopted by the Executive Committee.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the plan and make comments thereon.

10. Round-table discussion: Vision and strategic directions for ESCWA work in the field of statistics for the period 2020-2025 (E/ESCWA/C.1/2019/CRP.2)

The round-table discussion aims to develop strategic guidelines for the work of the ESCWA secretariat in the field of statistics for the period 2020-2025, and to determine priorities for the support it provides to member States, especially regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Statistical Committee is invited to highlight key national priorities in the field of statistics for the coming years.

11. Coordinating a regional position on the topics of discussion at the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

The item aims to coordinate ESCWA member States' position on the topics of discussion at the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which will be held in New York in March 2019. The secretariat will give a presentation on the session's agenda items and related key issues from a regional perspective.

The Statistical Committee is invited to discuss the agenda items of the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission to reach a common position thereon.

12. Date and venue of the fourteenth session of the Statistical Committee

The Committee will discuss the date and venue of its fourteenth session.

13. Other matters

This item will cover any other matters that the members of the Committee may wish to discuss.

14. Adoption of recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its thirteenth session

The Committee will review the draft recommendations of the thirteenth session for discussion and adoption.
