



## **Third Working Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics**

6-8 March 2013, UNCC - Bangkok, Thailand

### **REPORT**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The TAG at its second working meeting in June 2012 proposed a three-step strategy, work plan and a revised draft of the core set of population and social statistics. A consultation on the core set was undertaken by countries and international organizations. In addition to overall support of the proposed core set, respondents also provided comments and suggestions for improvement.
2. The third session of the Committee on Statistics endorsed not only the strategy and work plan of the TAG, but also the proposed core set. Furthermore, it made a few suggestions for more detailed information in both the work plan and core set. Members of the Committee also provided recommendations and suggestions to guide the work of the TAG.
3. The objective of the third meeting of the TAG was to follow up on the second step of the strategy – conducting reviews of national practices in population and social statistics, while taking into considerations the feedback from the consultations on the core set as well as the comments provided by the members of the Committee on statistics. See Annex I and II for the meeting agenda and the participants.
4. Through exchange of expert views, the TAG decided to carry out the following activities to further the work on population and social statistics in the region:
  - a) to refine the core set of population and social statistics by including additional information on important national and international issues;
  - b) to create a capacity development framework to encompass factors relevant to the delivery of the refined core set; and
  - c) to launch the national review of systemic issues regarding population and social statistics.
5. In addition, TAG agreed on a more detailed workshop plan as described in Section VI. The rest of the document summarizes the deliberations of the above main agreements and may not always follow the programme structure.

## II. Refining the core set of population and social statistics

6. The TAG was briefed on a number of important developments relevant to population and social statistics since the last meeting in June 2012. These included: consultations with member states and international organisations on the draft core set made in preparation for the submission to the Committee on Statistics; deliberations at the third session of the Committee on Statistics of the TAG's proposed strategic approach and the core set of population and social statistics; the launch of the regional initiative on civil registration and vital statistics entitled *Making Every Life Count*; and emerging policy priorities from global and regional dialogues on the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. The TAG was also briefed on the Framework of Inclusive Development Indicators at the Asian Development Bank.
7. In terms of the need for further refining of the core set, the following issues stood out in the feedback from consultations as well as the Committee deliberations:
  - Developing further details of the themes in the core set, clearer definitions, more illustrative indicators (as examples).
  - Clearer guidance on data sources and available international standards
  - Linkages between domains, e.g., between “population”, “health” and “employment”, and “health” and “wealth”.
  - Elaborate on the relevant characteristics for disaggregation across statistical themes.
  - The lack of statistical standards which for some domains may affect comparability, relevance and interpretability, which in turn would affect prioritization of capacity development efforts.
8. The global and regional dialogues on the post-2015 development agenda have highlighted inclusive economic development, inclusive social development, environmental sustainability and peace and security as the enablers for achieving the goals of human rights, equality and sustainability. In addition, Rio+20 emphasized three pillars of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social dimensions – as well as poverty reduction, equality and energy. There is growing congruence between the dialogues on the post-2015 development agenda and the follow-up to the Rio+20 outcome.
9. ADB developed the Framework of Inclusive Development Indicators (FIGI) to measure and research into inclusive growth, and to provide evidence for reducing both poverty and inequality based in three policy pillars: growth and expansion of economic opportunities; social inclusion to ensure equal access to economic opportunities; and social safety nets to protect the chronically poor and to mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities of people supported by good governance and sound institutions. It focuses on 35 indicators related to both economic and social aspects. However, in terms of data for these indicators, there are several practical challenges, such as data availability, lack of disaggregation, etc. The sources for FIGI are mainly international organizations (e.g., poverty data from World Bank), and only when these are not available are national sources used.

10. The ILO also emphasized the importance of making social protection a policy priority. Standards and measurement guidelines are available but there is a lack of data and coordination among national agencies.
11. In view of the above, the TAG reviewed the domains, themes, example indicators and levels of disaggregation of the core set and suggested that it should be refined to meet the needs of the national, regional and international policy priorities. The refinements would include adding the following to the core set:
  - The environment and people affected by disasters especially in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development.
  - Levels of social inclusion and the protection offered to groups like the unemployed.
  - The religion and ethnicity of people affected by social issues.
  - The economic status of households and individuals.

### **III. Creating a capacity development framework for population and social statistics**

12. While discussing the refinement of the core set, the TAG also reviewed the two posters produced by Ms Gemma Van Halderen (<http://www.unescap.org/stat/social-stat/meeting-Mar2013/Capacity-framework.pdf>). Keeping the core set at the heart, the posters highlighted related dimensions, such as policy contexts, statistical infrastructure, statistical standards and partners for population and social statistics.
13. The TAG agreed that schematic presentation of the two posters highlighted some of the critical issues regarding capacity development for population and social statistics. The structure of the presentation can thus be used to organize discussions and reflections on capacity development. The TAG agreed to use the presentation as the basis for creating a capacity development framework for population and social statistics.
14. The full capacity development framework therefore consists of the following components:
  - Strategic goal of the Committee on Statistics
  - National and international policy priorities
  - Domains of the core set of population and social statistics
  - Statistical themes of the core set
  - Relevant characteristics and common disaggregation of the core set
  - Illustrative examples of the core set indicators
  - National policy frameworks
  - Internationally and regionally agreed policy frameworks
  - Advocacy, partners and coordination
  - Infrastructure and data sources
  - Statistical frameworks, standards and classifications
  - Dissemination and use
  - Skills

### Strategic goal of the Committee on Statistics

15. The impetus for the work of the TAG on population and social statistics comes from the strategic goals that the Committee on Statistics endorsed at its second session, particularly goal 1 which is to ensure that all countries in the ESCAP region will have the capability by 2020 produce a basic range of population, economic, social and environment statistics.

### National and international policy priorities

16. The core set is intended to capture the basic policy needs regarding people's lives and living conditions. Although its relevance should not be judged by the policy focus of the day, it should be broad enough to serve the information needs of national and international policies to improve people's lives and living conditions.
17. At the same time, the TAG agreed that efforts should be made to identify the links between relevant statistics of the core set and existing and emerging national and international policy priorities. Highlighting such links is crucial for securing political commitment and resources required for the improvement of population and social statistics and regional capability development. The TAG emphasized that where national goals or policy priorities related to statistics of the core set or some domains exist, such links should be made explicit to raise awareness among the relevant policy-makers and stakeholders. Examples at national, regional and international levels included:
- “women's empowerment” and the “moderately prosperous society” in China, both of which are covered in the core set of population and social statistics;
  - the Framework of Inclusive Growth Indicators of ADB, the Millennium Development Goals, post-2015 development agenda, Rio+20 sustainable development agenda, Education for All; as well as
  - population dynamics, human and social capital, personal wellbeing, societal progress, urbanization, security, among others.
18. TAG members agreed that links between the core set and policy goals or priorities as mentioned above would help make a case for governments and the society at large to invest in the improvement in population and social statistics since they highlight the potential value of such investments.
19. The TAG also recognized that national development plans and international commitments to which governments have pledged support will determine the relevance and priorities of the core set of population and social statistics to each nation. And that the framework should be a “living” document which can be updated as statistical and policy requirements evolve.

### Domains of the core set of population and social statistics

20. This refers to the 11 domains of the core set of population and social statistics.

### Statistical themes of the core set

21. This refers to the statistical themes in each of the 11 domains. As mentioned above, TAG members agreed to include additional themes to reflect existing and emerging policy priorities.

### Relevant characteristics and common disaggregation of the core set

22. A very important dimension of the core set is that the statistics measure the variation across various population groups as defined by age, gender, geographical location, birth place, educational attainment, membership in religious and ethnic groups, economic status, etc.

### Illustrative examples of the core set indicators

23. The core set includes the statistics' underlying indicators and examples are given to illustrate the types of indicators that can be constructed using such statistics. The examples that are given are limited and the statistics can be used to construct a wider range of other indicators.

### National policy frameworks

24. The primary purpose of the core set is to meet the needs of decision-making by governments, civil society organizations and the individuals in the national context. It is thus useful to identify national policy and indicator frameworks associated with each domain of the core statistics. Indicator frameworks are closely related to policy goals. They typically specify the targets for the policy goals as well as the (sets of) indicators to measure the achievement of the targets. The core set is intended to provide the underlying statistics for the indicators. Highlighting the links between policy goals and priorities with the related core population and social statistics will reveal the gaps in the core set and trigger discussions of possible inclusion of additional important statistics in the core set. It would also help build the case for the work on population and social statistics by explicitly examining the extent to which the core set covers related national and international indicator frameworks.
25. Examples of national policy frameworks include the State Program on Socio-Economic Development and State Strategy for Employment, and State Program on Reducing Poverty in Azerbaijan and the National program of Action for Development of Women and Children in China. In principle, National Statistics Development Strategy (e.g. as applied in Bangladesh) also reflect the policy priorities in the national context.

### Internationally and regionally agreed policy frameworks

26. This is similar to the above, except that it applies to regional and international contexts. Policy frameworks at these levels include the various agreements on social and economic development adopted by the United Nations (e.g. Millennium Development Goals and Education for All), as well as the analyses that are presented in the Human Development Reports, the Framework for Inclusive Development Indicators, among others.

### Advocacy, partners and coordination

27. Efforts should be made to identify and build synergies with existing global and regional capability development initiatives to improve information systems. They also include other statistical capacity development programmes under the auspices of the Committee on Statistics. The TAG recognised the importance of maximising the benefit of this resource and in particular coordinating the efforts of national agencies responsible for the delivery of the core set and international development partners. Such coordination will provide mutual reinforcements and will benefit all programmes.

### Infrastructure and data sources

28. Statistics contained in the core set come from several major sources, including administrative records, population and housing censuses, and household- or community-based sample surveys. With the rapid increase in the use of information and technology, the potential of Big Data is getting attention from the statistical community. The various methods of collecting and compiling statistics have different implications on the timeliness, reliability and costs, among other things.
29. Questions arising from the existence of multiple data sources include: To what extent is there duplication in the collection of statistics through different instruments? What gains can be made by achieving better harmonization among the various sources? What options are there to improve harmonization? Are statistics from various sources comparable? What can be gained by linking statistics from different sources? To what extent are statistics from administrative records compliant with existing standards? Can gaps in statistical sources and infrastructure be alleviated by other sources such as Big Data?
30. The collection and compilation of statistics contained in the core set typically involves not only national statistical offices, but a multitude of other government and non-government agencies. For instance, many line ministries collect statistics in the areas of their expertise through administrative records and sample surveys. In addition, international and bilateral agencies have also played important roles in the collection of statistics in some areas. Examples include the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys supported by UNICEF and the Demographic and Health Surveys supported by the United States Government. Statistics on perceptions and opinions are gaining wide-spread attention and are contained in the core set. Academic institutions and private entities have been very active in leading the methodological development and data collection on perceptions and opinions.
31. The involvement of multiple of players in the collection, dissemination and use of population and social statistics raises several issues about capacity development. These include:
- Is there an overall legal framework regarding the collection and dissemination of population and social statistics? What mandates do various entities have? What is the role of the national statistical office in population and social statistics?
  - Do various parties have adequate human resources and financial resources to carry out the work according to quality standards? In terms of human resources, are there major gaps in

the technical expertise of the staff of the national statistical office and other parties in population and social statistics?

- Is there an effective coordination mechanism regarding population and social statistics within the national context? What can be improved?

#### Statistical frameworks, standards and classifications

32. Quality assurance is essential to guarantee that the information from the statistics is accurate, reliable, relevant and timely. For example, in terms of population statistics, existing international frameworks and standards include the United Nations Handbook on Civil Registration, Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, and the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, among others. There are also standards developed by national organizations. It is important to ensure that the statistical work complies with existing statistical frameworks, standards and classifications. When no standards exist, it is necessary to raise awareness among expert communities and have the necessary standards developed.

#### Dissemination and use

33. The ultimate purpose of collecting and compiling statistics is to inform decision-making by governments, civil society organizations as well as individuals. Thus capacity development efforts must include ways to effectively disseminate and use statistics.

#### Skills

34. Having staff with the appropriate combination of skills is a critical part of the national statistical capacity development. It is important that staff members in the national statistical system are equipped with the skills in statistical concepts and applications, both general and in specialized areas. The Core Skills Framework developed by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific would be useful for examining the status of statistical skills of staff.
35. In addition to well-trained statisticians, an effective statistical system also requires leaders who are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills, well-prepared managers at different levels, professionals working on issues including, research and communication, as well as Information Communication Technology (ICT) and logistical support.
36. Extending the scope of the TAG from a core statistical set to a broader capacity framework is a substantial step towards developing a basic set of population and social statistics in the region. But the TAG noted that further collaboration with TAG members and international partners was required and decided to further update the capacity framework with a review of completed statistical capacity building projects (e.g., regional programme on Economic Statistics, regional programme on CRVS, global review of Fundamental Principles of Statistics, etc.), and from collaboration with member States and international partner organizations.

#### **IV. Review of national practices**

37. The presentations and discussions on the review of national practices in population and social statistics centred around the following issues:

- Purposes of the review
- What to review
- How to review

##### Purpose of the review of national practices

38. Discussions on what the review of national practices is to achieve occurred throughout the meeting. After much reflection and discussion, the TAG came to the conclusions that the review should serve multiple purposes.

39. The primary purpose of the review is to identify existing challenges and to seek opportunities for improvement in the practices of the production, dissemination and use of population and social statistics.

40. There are two layers to this overall purpose. One is to gain a better understanding of the status of the population and social statistics to *inform* national plans of action and regional plans of support. The TAG agreed that through the review of national practices, various parts of the national statistical systems involved in the production, dissemination and use of population and social statistics will also have the opportunity to have dialogues among themselves and reflect on a wide range of issues. The dialogue and reflection will be essential for laying the foundation for coordinated actions for improvement.

41. As such, the review will serve not only inform national plans, but will also be essential to the achievement of the strategic goals of the Committee by strengthening advocacy, mobilizing support and improving coordination, which are fundamental issues of national capacity development.

##### What to review

42. The discussions on “what to review” were informed by the sharing of experiences in Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and India, as well as UNODC and ILO.

43. The TAG agreed that the capacity development framework will be the basis for determining the focus and scope of the review of national practices and should highlight:

- The status of the production-analysis-dissemination-and use of population and social statistics;
- The existing gaps and underlying barriers/challenges which form the basis of capacity development. For this, it is important to identify the underlying reasons for the gaps;
- Possible national good practices (what works well given the national context),
- Suggestions and plans on how the NSS for population and social statistics could work better.



44. More specifically, the following issues/questions were suggested for consideration for the *Availability and quality aspects of the core set*:

- **Availability:** Is the (statistical theme of the) core set being produced, analysed, disseminated and used?
  - **If not available:** Why? Lack of capacity, or not relevant, etc.
  - **If available:** possible **quality aspects** to consider
- **Sources of data:** census, administrative data, international surveys, national surveys, others? What is the coverage and accuracy of those data sources? To what extent do they meet existing quality standards?
- **Who** collects, compiles, analyses, disseminates and uses it?
- What data **disaggregation** is available? Is it enough for policy needs?
- What are the **definitions and standards** followed?
- What is the **timeliness and frequency**?
- Are data **comparable** across regions in the country, and over time?
- Are data **analysed and policy implications** produced?
- What are the **dissemination** practices?
- Are **user needs and satisfactions** assessed? How? What are the main results?
- What are the **priorities** of data users?

45. The following issues/questions were suggested for the review of *National Statistical System (NSS)*:

- **Overall structure** of the NSS in respect to population and social statistics: who does what? To what extent are the needs for population and social statistics met?
- **Legislation** and regulatory framework – does the country have statistical laws, which ones, what implications for the production/analysis/dissemination/use of population and social statistics?
- **Role of NSO** within NSS for population and social statistics
- Role of **all national (and international) agencies** involved in population and social statistics: What are the mandates of different stakeholders? How do they work together? Is there a legal framework spelling out the mandates and roles of various stakeholders?
- **Resources and skills:** Staff members of NSO as well as statistical departments of other agencies working in population and social statistics – important to address existing expertise, gaps, training, and turnover;
- Existing mechanisms to **monitor and ensure quality**;
- Role of **users in influencing** the production-analysis-and dissemination of population and social statistics. Main user groups would include policy-makers, the public, researchers, etc. “Only used statistics are useful statistics”!
- Level of **users literacy** in analysing and interpreting population and social statistics;
- Level of **trust** in the statistics produced by NSO and by other agencies working in population and social statistics (and if challenge is identified, as “why?”).

#### How to review

46. The TAG reflected and discussed the issue of “how to review” in a focused session. The focused session was informed by a briefing on lessons learnt from international and national

experiences, including capacity assessment in economic statistics and civil registration and vital statistics at ESCAP, statistical capacity assessment conducted by ADB and SPC, as well as in Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia and the Philippines. The reflections were followed by a combination of plenary and small group work to produce a tentative set of guidelines for national review and concluded with a plenary discussion. The discussion was aided by a draft questionnaire prepared by Mr Sairi Hasbullah (<http://www.unescap.org/stat/social-stat/meeting-Mar2013/4.2-Indonesia-example.pdf>).

47. In addition, the topic of “how to review” was brought up in discussions on developing the capacity development framework and the purpose of the review. Indeed, the topic permeated throughout the meeting.
48. Through the discussions, the TAG came to the conclusion that the review serves multiple purposes, a very important one of which is to engender dialogue among various producers and users of population and social statistics within the national statistical systems and introduce reflections on both strategic and technical issues regarding the capacity to improve population and social statistics. This is also the opportunity to involve bilateral and multilateral development partners to orient their support. Through the review, countries can also identify and share good practices, promoting learning from each other.
49. The dialogues and collection reflection thus initiated have the potential to create a common goal and momentum for countries in the region to improve their national capacity in population and social statistics.

#### *Two types of review*

50. The TAG decided to launch two types of review in consideration of the multiple purposes of the review of national practices.

##### *a. National reflection led by chief statisticians*

51. The first type of review is to be led by chief statisticians and to reflect on systemic issues regarding population and social statistics in the national context. Given that population and social statistics rely on good systems, involving decision-makers of the various parts of the national statistical systems and initiating dialogues are critical for securing the political support, improving coordination, ensuring adequate resources and concerted efforts. Such high level involvement in the early stage will also raise the visibility of population and social statistics in the country.
52. The reflection of statistical systems led by chief statisticians is an opportunity to start a national dialogue in terms of the priorities and gaps of population and social statistics, and to engage national stakeholders (from producers to users), highlighting the important role of NSOs in the overall National Statistical System.
53. It is also the beginning of a long-term process of improving understanding of population and social statistics. This is an essential requirement for policymakers of population and social

statistics and will not only improve the quality of evidence-based decision-making but also is also likely to win long-term support for population and social statistics.

54. Finally, it is an opportunity to identify areas where regional support is needed for national improvements.
55. The importance of finding national leaders who are interested, committed, willing and have the resources and contacts to mobilize (or at least, start) national engagement was further emphasized. One possibility is to conduct a high level workshop led by the chief statistician in the country, inviting senior officials from ministries involved in the production and use of population and social statistics. An example of this was shared by Australia in relation to an Essential Statistical Assets for Australia initiative.
56. It is important to make explicit that the overall national engagement process is continuous - it started with consultations on core set, and now includes the engagement of national leaders.

*b. In-depth review of national practices*

57. The second type of national review would focus on the priority areas and issues identified through the dialogues and reflections of systemic issues led by the chief statisticians. The second type of review will then tackle more concrete issues, including technical challenges and solutions, as well specific actions that can be taken to tackle various problems. The second type of review is critical for countries to formulate concrete plans of improvement after the reflection on systemic issues.

*Basic principles*

58. Throughout the discussion, the TAG suggested several key principles that the work on population and social statistics should follow:
  - National ownership. To ensure that improvements in population and social statistics are likely to occur, it is a pre-requisite that the national stakeholders own every step of the process. All those involved in the production-analysis-dissemination-use of population and social statistics must believe in the necessity of improvements, agree on the major challenges and are committed to working together. National ownership can only be achieved by ensuring that the process is driven by countries and led by them.
  - Regional support. At the regional level, the programme should be able to provide support to member States in developing national statistical capacity, by providing: technical expertise (possibly developing a directory of skills available), training activities, awareness raising and advocacy tools, sharing experiences and good practices.
  - Coordination of stakeholders. International partner organizations should coordinate their support with the needs of national entities to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.
  - Strengthening the role of NSOs, within the National Statistical System, in the area of population and social statistics is a possible way to enhance the coordination of

stakeholders involved in the production-analysis-dissemination-use of population and social statistics.

- Raise awareness on the core set and its role in guiding national statistical capacity development.

59. In addition, the TAG proposed that the following principles should be followed in carrying out the review of national practices:

- Country driven. Countries need to be aware and agree to the benefits from the overall review process as well as the issues to be covered in the review, such as improving communication and collaboration across the NSS. It is essential for the main players of the national review to see the process as an opportunity to raise their statistical capacity and support social development, identify priority areas for action within their national policy priorities, etc.
- Country-led. The reviews should be led by countries. This means that whole process should be managed by national stakeholders, with international support as appropriate. For this purpose, having a national focal point responsible for the review will help national coordination and engagement throughout the process. The national focal point should be the representative of an agency that is interested, committed, willing and has the resources and contacts to mobilize (or at least, start) national engagement of all relevant national stakeholders. The regional programme can provide support along the national in-depth review processes, but not replace the national actors.
- The exact steps for the national review should be adapted to the type of institutional structure and functioning of the NSS;
- Involve the right people. This means that the review should involve not only technical experts but also senior-level managers and leaders of the different parts of the national statistical system. It would also be important to include various on-going and planned initiatives for developing statistical capacity, and also policy plans.
- The individuals and organizations involved in the review should be able to ensure the long-term sustainability of capacity development actions.
- It is important to emphasize that the review should involve individuals and organizations outside of the NSOs, so that different perspectives can be captured and there is a general mobilization of support around population and social statistics.
- The national review should cover both national level and sub-national level players (e.g., provincial, district, etc).
- The review is a continuous effort. This means that the review started with consultations on core set, in 2012 and is to continue.
- The in-depth assessment can be used as a national tool to monitor progress in population and social statistics (every 2 or 3 years).
- The in-depth assessment should be seen as a training and capacity development tool.

60. All of the above means that the review is much broader than an exercise to collect and analyse information. Rather it is a *process* for important national stakeholders to reflect on a wide range of issues regarding the production, analysis, dissemination and use of population and social statistics, identify the gaps and collectively seek solutions, with support by other development partners.

61. In addition, the TAG discussed that in order to support the national review, the following tasks needed to be carried out:
- In terms of the methods of review, commonly used options include desk review of documents, interviews, focus groups, consultative workshops and surveys. The TAG agreed that most of the time it is important to have a combination of different methods.
  - The importance of specific guidelines on how to conduct an in-depth review, as well as goals and expected outcomes from such processes was highlighted.
  - A core template to compile and present results in a uniform way across countries is desirable. However, this template should be flexible enough to country specific context.
  - There should be a plan for follow up of the national reviews, so that stakeholders will receive feedback from their participation and know what/how they can benefit from it.
62. The preparation of the documents to support the two types of review should be informed by existing knowledge of the status of implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (surveys organized by the United Nations Statistical Division), the National Statistical Development Strategy documents in the region (PARIS21), as well as lessons learned from other existing statistical capacity development programmes.

## **V. Continuous advocacy and awareness raising**

63. The TAG acknowledged the importance of having continuous advocacy and awareness raising within the development of its work plan.
64. It was recognized that the Regional Strategic Plan mentioned above (consultations, engagement of national leaders, in-depth assessments) were important opportunities for continuous advocacy and awareness raising in terms of population and social statistics, as well as the regional programme for capacity development.
65. Furthermore, there were a few suggestions for additional activities of advocacy and awareness raising:
- a brochure introducing the regional programme and the core set (an idea similar to the one in Economic Statistics);
  - a template PowerPoint presentation that could be used by TAG members when referring to the regional programme in conferences and seminars;
  - a place in the web where TAG members could announce national, regional and global events in the area of population and social statistics and progress against the project plan.
66. The TAG also acknowledged the importance of developing specific advocacy activities to seek for donor support for the regional programme, and suggested this will be a specific topic of the agenda of next TAG meeting.

## VI. Detailed work plan of the TAG

67. The TAG acknowledged that the work of a regional programme on capacity development in population and social statistics started with the endorsement of the two strategic goals by the Committee on Statistics at its second session in December 2010. It continued with the establishment of the TAG, the development of the proposed core set, consultations with national and international agencies on the proposed core set, and the subsequent adoption of the core set by the Committee at its third session. These activities demonstrate the commitment by member states to the improvement in population and social statistics and provided opportunities to engage with national and international partners. They are also an important step towards empowering NSOs and enhancing their role in the area of population and social statistics.
68. The activities undertaken so far also enabled the collection of information regarding broad system gaps in the area of population and social statistics, relevant to support designing the following steps of the programme. The summary of the activities conducted so far are presented in the table below, activities **i.** to **vi.**
69. For the next two years, the TAG plans to strengthen the initial foundations of the Regional Strategic Plan and to reinforce the engagement of the national statistical system. Following a request from the third session of the Committee on Statistics, the TAG developed a detailed work plan for its activities, which consists of the following:

- i. **Creation of a framework for capacity development, which includes a refinement of the core set.** This capacity framework will include all main dimensions affecting the national capacity to produce, analyse, disseminate and use population and social statistics. The establishment of the capacity framework will be informed by:
  - the feedback from previous national and international consultations (done during July-September 2012);
  - a desk review of main dimensions and systemic gaps identified in other regional programmes for capacity development (e.g., Economic Statistics, CRVS), as well as the review of the global review of the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics conducted in 2012 by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD);
  - feedback from TAG members;
  - feedback from NSOs of ESCAP member States and international partner organizations.

This set of activities should take place between March and June 2013, and are presented in the table below by activity **vii.** .

- ii. **Develop a set of principles and guidelines for a regional programme to improve the capacity to produce population and social statistics.** The principles and guidelines are to highlight the key approaches to the improvement of population and social statistics, including ownership and such regional support as technical cooperation, training, awareness raising and advocacy.

This activity should be informed by the work done so far, in particular the discussions at this third meeting of the TAG, and is planned to take place between March and June 2013. See item **viii** in the table below.

- iii. **Introduction to national reflections led by chief statistician** on systemic issues in terms of statistical capacity for population and social statistics, including challenges and opportunities. The reflection is to be informed by the capacity development framework, covers the entire national statistical system (not just NSOs), and focuses on the national needs and priorities in terms of: i) producing-analysing-disseminating-using population and social statistics, ii) main aspects of the institutional functioning of national statistical system in terms of population and social statistics. The results from this reflection should allow the identification of key priorities in terms of national capacity gaps (in the availability and quality of the core set, as well as in the functioning of the national statistical system) that could benefit from a regional approach to capacity development.

This process of national reflection should be seen by chief statisticians as an opportunity for dialogue with national counterparts in population and social statistics, to enhance ownership and accountability; therefore, is in itself an opportunity for capacity development.

This activity (number **ix**. in table below) involves several tasks:

- **Development of a tool** by TAG members to support national reflections. This should happen between March and June 2013. The tool (or its guidelines) should make explicit the purpose of the national reflections embedded in the “Principles and guidelines for the Regional Strategic Plan in capacity development”. Possibly using information from the desk review mentioned above, the tool is planned to be a relatively brief document/ assessment exercise with general-open questions to motivate reflection.

The tool can later be used as a mechanism to monitor progress on national capacity and show the evolution of the national and regional efforts for capacity building. The tool can mention the possibility of member States conducting an in-depth consultation of their national capacity in population and social statistics (for *in-depth consultation* please refer to next activity presented below).

- **Piloting the tool** in TAG member States, as soon as the tool is developed, **and use of the feedback to refine** the tool. This is planned to take place between March and June 2013;
- **Conducting the national reflections** by each ESCAP member States, between July and December 2013. Given that two regional meetings with chief statisticians are already scheduled for this period, the TAG suggests that they are used as platforms to present and engage chief statisticians in these national reflections. For the Pacific countries, the meeting of chief statisticians will happen in July 2013. For several other member States, there will be a senior management meeting with chief statisticians taken place in SIAP in September 2013;

- **Analysing the results from national reflections.**
  - **Conclusions and recommendations**
- iv. **Preparations for the national in-depth consultations**, by developing the tools and guidelines. The first draft of these tools and guidelines is planned from development between March and September 2013.
- This activity, item **x.** in summary table below, should use the relevant information from presentations and discussions at the third meeting of the TAG (e.g., example from Indonesia, and discussions on “What to review”), as well as from the desk review mentioned above.
- v. **Articulate a regional strategy** which should make explicit the countries’ specific priorities, as well as areas where a regional programme is better positioned to provide meaningful assistance.
- This activity is planned to take place during the first half of 2014, so that a final proposal is submitted to the Fourth session of the Committee on Statistics.
- vi. **Preparation and submission of documents to the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Statistics**, updating the progress of work of the TAG and presenting the proposal for endorsement of the regional strategy. This should happen between July and September 2014.
- vii. **Conducting in-depth national consultations**, which will provide detailed information on gaps at the level of: i) production-analysis-dissemination-use of the core set, ii) institutional statistical capacity in the area of population and social statistics.
- The structure of the national in-depth consultations should allow the development of a *roadmap*, where countries identify their needs and priorities to address those gaps, as well as areas where the regional programme can support their efforts.
- These in-depth national consultations can start as soon as their tools and guidelines are developed, i.e., after September 2013, but it is expected that the bulk of in-depth consultations will happen between 2015 and 2018.
- viii. **Ongoing regional activities on capacity development**, such as assistance on master samples or development of standards, by TAG members.



### Summary of TAG detailed work plan

Activities	Timing	Tools	Lead
i. Establishment of TAG, its membership and Terms of Reference	2011 up to February 2012 ( <i>completed</i> )	Background studies on existing frameworks and national practices	TAG
ii. Study and first round of discussions towards developing a <b>zero-draft of the Core set</b> of population and social statistics			
iii. Dialogue with the Bureau and further discussions among Technical Advisory Group members, leading to the <b>first-draft of the Core set</b>	March 2012 - June 2012 ( <i>completed</i> )	Background document for first-draft of Core set	TAG
iv. <b>National consultations</b> with all member States in the region <b>on the first-draft Core Set</b> - preparation, administration and analysis of the results	July 2012 - Third session of the Committee ( <i>completed</i> )	Questionnaire for consultation; guidelines for participants in consultations; background documents developed by NSOs in their national consultations	TAG, NSOs, and international partner organizations
v. <b>Consultation with international partner organizations on the first-draft Core Set</b> - preparation, administration and analysis of the results	July 2012 - third session of the Committee ( <i>completed</i> )		
vi. <b>Endorsement</b> of the Core set, endorsement of the strategic approach and workplan of the TAG, and <b>decision on continuation</b> of TAG	Third session of the Committee in Dec 2012 ( <i>completed</i> )	2 Papers submitted by TAG	TAG, Committee on Statistics
vii. <b>Establishment of a Capacity Framework</b> , through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review of existing documents (Econ Stats, CRVS, Global review of the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics);</li> <li>- Feedback from TAG members;</li> <li>- Feedback from NSOs;</li> <li>- Feedback from international partner organizations.</li> </ul>	March - June 2013	Results from previous consultations (activities <b>iv.</b> and <b>v.</b> above); feedback and documents from NSOs and international partner organizations	TAG, NSOs and international partner organizations
viii. Identification of <b>principles and guidelines for the Regional Strategic Plan</b> on Capacity development	March - June 2013		TAG
ix. <b>Introduction to national reflections</b> , by chief statisticians. This activity will have several tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Development of a tool</b> to support national reflections</li> </ul>	March - June 2013	The <i>Tool</i> is supposed to be brief with general/open questions.	TAG

b. <b>Pilot and refinement</b> of the tool by TAG members	March - June 2013	Among others, it should include questions on:  - Future national plans in each main area of capacity - Coordination and mechanism aspects.  The <i>Tool</i> should be based on principles and guidelines for a Regional Strategic Plan, and use information from desk review above (activity vii.)	TAG
c. <b>Conducting the national reflections</b> by ESCAP member States from <b>Pacific</b>	July 2013		SPC, NSOs from Pacific
d. <b>Conducting the national reflections</b> by ESCAP member States present at <b>SIAP</b> 's senior management meeting	September 2013		SIAP, NSOs present at senior management meeting
e. <b>Conducting the national reflections</b> by <b>all remaining</b> ESCAP member States	July - December 2013		NSOs from all remaining member States
f. <b>Analysing the results from the national reflections</b>	July – December 2013		TAG
x. <b>Preparations of the national in-depth consultations</b> , by preparing tools and guidelines	March – September 2013	The tools for in-depth consultations should use information from 3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the TAG and desk review above (activity vii.)	TAG
xi. <b>Finalise the proposal for the Regional Strategic Plan on Capacity development</b>	January – June 2014	Outcomes from previous activities and reflections	TAG
xii. Preparation and submission of documents to the 4 <sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Statistics	July - September 2014	Paper(s) submitted by TAG	TAG
xiii. <b>Conducting in-depth national consultations</b>	From 2013 until 2018		All ESCAP member States
xiv. <b>Regional activities</b> on capacity development, e.g., assistance on master samples, development of standards, etc.	ongoing		All ESCAP member States

## **Annex I – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **MEMBERS**

#### **AUSTRALIA**

Ms Sue Taylor, Acting Assistant Statistician, Demography, Regional and Social Analysis Branch, Population, Labour and Social Statistics Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

Ms Gemma Van Halderen, First Assistant Statistician, Population, Education and Data Integration Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

#### **AZERBAIJAN**

Mr Nemat Khuduzade, Deputy Head, Labour Statistics Division, State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku

#### **BANGLADESH**

Mr Dipankar Roy, Deputy Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka

#### **BHUTAN**

Mr Phub Sangay, Chief Statistical Officer, National Statistics Bureau, Thimphu

#### **CHINA**

Ms Wei Liu, Deputy Counsel, Department of Social, Science and Technology and Cultural Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics, Beijing

#### **INDIA**

Ms Sunitha Bhaskar, Director, Social Statistics Division, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, New Delhi

#### **INDONESIA**

Mr Sairi, Director, Social Resilience Statistics, BPS – Statistics Indonesia, Jakarta

## IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Ms Shirin Jafari, Expert of Statistical Surveys and Administrative Registers Expert of Census,  
Statistical Centre of Iran, Tehran

## MONGOLIA

Ms Oyunchimeg Dandar, Director, Population and Social Statistics Department, National  
Statistical Office, Ulaanbaatar

## PHILIPPINES

Ms Paula Monina Collado, Deputy Administrator, National Statistics Office, Manila

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## UNITED NATIONS BODIES

### UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

Mr. Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Deputy Programme Coordinator, UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre,  
Bangkok

Ms. Supharat Kaewkhonkaen, Statistics Associate, UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok

### UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

Mr Enrico Bisogno, Statistician, UNODC, Vienna

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## SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

### INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

Mr Tite Habiyakare, Regional Labour Statistician, ILO, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific,  
Bangkok

### UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

Ms Michell Osborne, Associate Expert, UNESCO Institute for Statistics Regional Office, UIS-  
AIMS Unit, UNESCO Bangkok

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)**

Mr Kaushal Joshi, Senior Statistician, ADB, Manila

### **SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)**

Mr Arthur Jorari, Demographer, SPC, Noumea Cedex

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## **SECRETARIAT**

### **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)**

Ms Carmelita Ericta	Chair, Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics Administrator and Civil Registration General, National Statistics Office, Philippines
Ms Haishan Fu	Chief, Statistics Division (SD)
Ms Rikke Munk Hansen	Chief, Statistical Information Services Section (SISS), SD
Mr Yanhong Zhang	Officer-in-Charge, Statistical Development and Analysis Section (SDAS), SD
Ms Isabel Pereira Rodrigues	Statistician, SD
Mr Eric Hermouet	Statistician, SD
Mr Daniel Clarke	Statistician, SD
Ms Harumi Shibata	Statistician, SD
Mr Habib Khan	Associate Statistician, SD
Mr Jonathan Marskell	Consultant, SD

### **ESCAP PACIFIC OFFICE**

Ms Jillian Campbell	Statistician
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## Annex II – PROGRAMME

Time	Session
09.00-09.10	<b>1. Opening</b> , by TAG co-Chair Mr. Sairi Hasbullah <b>1.1 Welcoming remarks</b> by Ms. Carmelita Ericta, Chair of ESCAP Committee on Statistics, (video)
09.10-09.15	<b>1.2. Objectives and expected outputs of the meeting</b> , by TAG co-Chair Ms. Gemma Van Halderen
09.15	<b>2. From refining the Core Set of population and social statistics to establishing a Capacity Framework</b> <i>Objective:</i> At the end of the session, the TAG established a Framework to develop national statistical Capacity in Population and Social Statistics, which include a plan for a refined Core Set. Supporting documents: “Core Set of population and social statistics in Asia-Pacific” <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/social-stat/Core-set-Pop-Social-Statistics.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/stat/social-stat/Core-set-Pop-Social-Statistics.pdf</a>
09.15-09.45	<b>2.1 Major developments since 2<sup>nd</sup> TAG meeting and their implications on refining the Core Set</b> , by Mr. Yanhong Zhang (ESCAP) The briefing covered the process of consultations on the Core set (July/Sept2012), outcomes and deliberations at the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Committee on Stats (Dec2012), relevant deliberations at the 44 <sup>th</sup> UN Statistical Commission (Feb2013) and regional programme on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee (CST3):  <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-17E-report.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-17E-report.pdf</a></li> <li>TAG papers submitted to CST3: <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5E.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5E.pdf</a> and <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5AE1.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5AE1.pdf</a></li> <li>Webpage on CRVS: <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/vital-stat/high-level/index.asp">http://www.unescap.org/stat/vital-stat/high-level/index.asp</a></li> <li>Webpage on 44<sup>th</sup> UN Statistical Commission:  <a href="http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_44th_session.htm">http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_44th_session.htm</a></li> </ul>
09.45-10.15	<b>2.2 Main policy issues emerging from the follow-up to Rio+20 and ongoing dialogues on post-2015 development agenda, and their implications on the domains of population and social statistics</b> , by Mr. Bishwa Tiwari (UNDP) Supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Realizing the future we want for all”, UNTT report to the Secretary-General:  <a href="http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf">http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf</a></li> <li>“The future we want”, General Assembly resolution:  <a href="http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&amp;Lang=E">http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&amp;Lang=E</a></li> <li>CST3 paper on “Advancing the global development agenda beyond 2015: Potential contributions by national statistical systems”: <a href="http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-10E.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-10E.pdf</a></li> </ul>

Time	Session
10.15-10.30	Coffee break, with group photo
10.30-10.50	<p><b>2.3 Framework of Inclusive Growth Indicators, and the importance of measuring the economic and social inclusion</b>, by Mr. Kaushal Joshi (ADB)</p> <p>Supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.adb.org/key-indicators/2011/special-supplement">http://www.adb.org/key-indicators/2011/special-supplement</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2012">http://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2012</a></li> </ul>
10.50-11.05	<p><b>2.4 Outcomes of the consultations on the Core Set done in Jul/Sept 2012</b>, by Ms. Isabel Rodrigues (ESCAP)</p> <p>Supporting documents: Summary of the consultations (to be distributed)</p>
11.05-12.00	<p><b>2.5. Formulating the plan of refining the Core Set</b> (technical guidelines, standards, definitions, etc).</p> <p>Open discussion, moderated by Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)</p> <p><i>Objective:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify principles and frameworks for refinement of the Core Set (e.g., whether based on the global and regional dialogues, or focusing on the areas most in need of statistical development, or focusing on the areas where more solid work has already being done at international level, or other criteria?)</li> <li>• To identify what, when and how to refine Core set, in the context of a Capacity Framework</li> </ul>
12.00-13.00	Lunch break
13.00	<p><b>3. Review of national practices: (1) What to review?</b></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> At the end of the session, the TAG produced a list of priority issues and topics as the focus of national review</p>
13.00-13.05	<p><b>3.1. Introduction:</b> purpose, expected outcomes, structure of discussions</p> <p>By Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)</p>
13.05–15.00	<p><b>3.2. Setting priorities for “What to review?”</b></p> <p>Possible issues for national review include: availability and quality of Core set, processes and flows, products in each stage of the process, institutional framework, existing gaps and needs of assistance.</p> <p>The discussion was organized with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lead discussions:</b> <p>By <b>5 member States from TAG:</b> Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and India; and by <b>2 international partners:</b> UNODC (Mr. Enrico Bisogno, videoconf) and ILO (Mr. Tite Habiyakare)</p> </li> <li><b>Plenary debate</b>, moderated by Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)</li> </ol> <p><i>Objective:</i> to have a set of dimensions to be used in national reviews to obtain qualitative and quantitative information.</p>

15.00-15.15	Coffee break
15.15-17.00	<b>3.2. Setting priorities for “What to review?”</b> (cont.)

## Day 2, 7 March

Time	Session
09.00-09.10	<b>Recap</b> of the previous day and <b>introduction</b> to the objectives of session 3 By: Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)
09.10	<b>4. Review of national practices: (2) How to review?</b> <i>Objective: At the end of the session, the TAG will produce a set of guidelines of obtaining the qualitative and quantitative information on the priority issues and topics.</i>
09.10-10.15	<b>4.1 Learning from experiences on “How to review?”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences from national assessments for the regional programme on <i>economic statistics</i>, Ms. Jillian Campbell, ESCAP (videoconf)</li> <li>Experiences from national assessments on <i>civil registration and vital statistics</i>, Ms. Harumi Shibata, ESCAP</li> <li>ADB experiences in assessing national statistical capacity, Mr. Kaushal Joshi</li> <li>SPC experiences in assessing national statistical capacity, Mr. Arthur Jorari</li> </ul> Supporting documents: Mikkelsen (2012) “Improving CRVS – lessons learnt”, <a href="http://www.uq.edu.au/hishub/docs/WP24/HISHUB-WP%2024_7%2012%2012.pdf">http://www.uq.edu.au/hishub/docs/WP24/HISHUB-WP%2024_7%2012%2012.pdf</a>
10.15-10.30	Coffee break
10.30 – 12.00	<b>4.2 National perspectives on “How to review?”</b> This session started with TAG members sharing their views on the main components and steps of the process for national reviews, namely: most adequate methods of review, main steps in the process, and how to compile and present results.  The discussion was organized with: <b>1. Lead discussions, by 5 member States from TAG:</b> Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia, Philippines; <b>2. Plenary debate,</b> moderated by Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)
12.00-13.30	Lunch break
13.30	<b>5. Guidelines for national reviews</b>
13.30–13.35	<b>5.a. Introduction</b> to the Group work: purpose and logistics
13.35–15.00	<b>5.b. Group work</b> <i>Objective:</i> based on the discussions from “3. What to review?” and “4. How to review?”, each group was expected to draft guidelines to conduct the national reviews, both in terms of content and process.



15.0 – 15.15	Coffee break
15.15– 16.00	<b>5.c. Presentations by the groups</b> of their proposed guidelines
16.00– 17.00	<b>5.d. Plenary discussion and decisions on “Guidelines for national reviews”</b> Open discussion, moderated by Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)

### Day 3, 8 March

Time	Session
09.00-09.10	<b>Recap of the main conclusions on “national reviews”</b> , by TAG Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)
09.10-10.10	<b>6. Detailed TAG workplan</b> Open discussion, moderated by TAG Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)  <i>Objective: to identify timeframe of TAG activities for the months ahead, addressing recommendations from third session of the Committee on Statistics</i>
10.10-10.25	Coffee break
10.25-11.30	<b>7. TAG activities on advocacy and awareness raising</b> Open discussion, moderated by Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)  <i>Objective: to identify activities that TAG can do to advocate and create awareness on the relevance to improve population and social stats, and on this regional programme as an answer</i> <i>“The importance of advocacy and awareness raising in capacity building programmes. Lessons learnt and successful examples.”</i>
11.30-11.45	<b>8. Closing of the meeting</b> , by TAG Co-chairs (Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Mr. Sairi Hasbullah)