

# CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2018 HLPF

## STATISTICAL COMMISSION

1 May 2018

The statistical community emphasizes the need for quality, accessible, open, timely and reliable disaggregated data as fundamental for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the full realization of its ambition of leaving no one behind. It also works towards establishing strong systems for reporting and reviews on the sustainable development goals (SDG) at all levels, national and subnational, and global. Thus, it strives to develop methodologies to innovate and modernize statistical production operations, to explore ways to integrate all data sources, including new and innovative sources outside the traditional statistical systems, and to analyze, visualize and disseminate data in an open, timely and effective way. The statistical community also agrees with the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems especially in the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and other countries in vulnerable situations, to meet the data demands for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs and targets.

In this context, the Statistical Commission thanks the President of ECOSOC and provides herewith our most salient contributions to the 2030 Agenda, following the template suggested.

### I. ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION REGARDING THE PRINCIPLE OF “ENSURING THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND” AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

The Statistical Commission adopted in 2017 the global indicator framework, developed by its IAEG on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which forms the basis for the annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals to inform the HLPF. Currently, the Statistical Commission continues its work on the global indicator framework, including annual refinements, a comprehensive review in 2020, and methodological development of Tier III indicators. The IAEG-SDGs has also established a data disaggregation workstream to define the dimensions of disaggregation of the indicators.

To ensure that statistical systems have the capacity to meet the data demands to ensure that no one is left behind, the Statistical Commission gives particular attention to vulnerable groups where statistical production needs further development, including people living with disabilities, older people, and migrants. In particular, a new city group, the Titchfield group, was established on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data. In addition, the Statistical Commission is collaborating in the Global Compact for Migration, to guarantee that all the policy issues are adequately considered in developing the right tools for data collection on migration and migration status. Related to this topic and to the key principle of leaving no one behind, the UN Statistical Commission also produced the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics and the Technical Report on Statistics on Internally Displaced persons.

Furthermore, the Statistical Commission will revise the Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics, including the review of methodological instruments and guidance for the disaggregation of data by disability status.

This past year, standards for monitoring the decent work-related SDG indicators were advanced, and the Statistical Commission will take up the review of existing guidelines and standards relating to statistics on the informal sector and informal employment. Coupled with this, the Statistical Commission, mandated its Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) to continue to work on data disaggregation dimensions and categories for gender relevant SDG indicators and to provide inputs and contribute to the organization of the 2018 Global Forum on Gender Statistics in Japan. Moreover, in order to improve poverty statistics and global assessments of progress in poverty reduction, the Statistical Commission works on methodology and measurement through its Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, which is an important contribution regarding the principle of ensuring that no one is left behind.

Finally, the Commission is focusing on SDG indicators that are critical to SIDS, working to consider the feasibility of using tentative existing indicators as proxies for immediate use to monitor targets related to Goals 13 and 14 on Climate Change and Oceans, while Tier III indicators are finalized.

## II. IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS, AREAS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION, RISKS AND CHALLENGES

The Statistical Commission has identified insufficient statistical capacity as one of the key challenges for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. The General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/313, which was adopted on the recommendation of the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Statistical Commission in 2017, stresses the urgent need “to intensify [...] support for strengthening data collection and statistical capacity-building, including capacity-building [...] in developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict countries, using all available means of support”.

The Statistical Commission and the GA resolution also stress the importance of using the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, launched at the first United Nations World Data Forum in Cape Town, South Africa, in January 2017, as the framework for discussion, planning, implementation and evaluation of statistical capacity-building pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda, established by the UNSC in 2015, leads the work in this area. In 2017, in collaboration with PARIS21, it conducted a survey on assessing capacity building needs, including immediate needs in addressing the demand of producing SDG indicators where data coverage is particularly poor.

The Statistical Commission also established the Global network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST) to address the capacity gaps in countries as concerns the skills that needs to be developed or strengthened in national statistical systems to address the new data demands. This network, consisting of regional and international training institutes and NSOs that provide training outside their national borders, will facilitate collaboration across the institutions with the ultimate aim of providing efficient, effective and harmonized development and delivery of training in official statistics. The members of this network are key providers of training in official statistics at the global and regional levels. They bring their expertise in various topical areas, and will leverage their understanding of relevant issues and challenges in providing statistical training to strengthen training in official statistics.

The Statistical Commission further established a working group on Big Data for official statistics, which provides strategic vision, direction and coordination for a global programme on the use new data sources and new technologies. It addresses concerns related to methodology, data quality, new skills and confidentiality, and promotes the practical use of Big Data sources, including capacity-building, training and the sharing of experience.

### III. VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNED ON TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES

The Statistical Commission requested its Secretariat, the Statistics Division to develop a global set of climate change statistics and indicators and work is currently underway which will involve, inter alia, a Global Consultation on Climate Change Statistics and Indicators. Furthermore, the Statistical Commission is providing a greater focus on disaster-related statistics given the importance of the Sendai Framework for Disaster-risk Reduction.

The Statistical Commission has adopted the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) – Central Framework as a statistical standard and recommended the revision of the SEEA Experimental Economic Accounting. The SEEA provide an integrated statistical framework linking environment and economic information in a common framework. The SEEA EEA provides a geospatial prospective to measure ecosystem condition and ecosystem services. Integrating environmental and economic information in the accounting framework provides a powerful tool to assess the contribution of the environment to the economy and the impacts of the economy on the environment thus informing integrated policies.

### IV. EMERGING ISSUES LIKELY TO AFFECT BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES

The Statistical Commission stresses the importance of balancing the protection of confidentiality and openness of data; and emphasizes the need to carefully address societal challenges of trust, ethics, privacy, confidentiality and security of data.

In this context, the Statistical Commission established a new sub-group within the existing Friends of the Chair Group on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, to provide guidance and tools to countries in establishing open data practices. The Group aims to bridge open data principles with those of the Fundamental Principles, while also addressing the need for data interoperability

principles and tools. The Group will also review principles and legal frameworks for open data and provide guidance for the important role of national statistical offices in promoting data openness.

#### V. AREAS WHERE POLITICAL GUIDANCE BY THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM IS REQUIRED

The HLPF is an important forum where discussions should focus on how to ensure the political commitment for building strong data and statistical systems that would help ensure the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It has become evident that without the necessary data, the implementation of the Agenda would be seriously hindered and, in particular, the ambition of no one left behind would not be realized.

In particular, the HLPF could provide guidance and support to the statistical community on how to ensure the support at the national and international level, and how to establish a strong dialogue between the statistical and the political communities and how to ensure the use of data by policy makers.

#### VI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES

The Statistical Commission needs to play a more active role in the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as requested in GA Resolution 71/313 (work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda). In order to give statistics and data the importance they deserve in terms of policy formulation, one or more sessions of the HLPF should be fully dedicated to data and statistics and to the needs for statistical capacity building.

The Statistical Commission requested its Secretariat, the Statistics Division, and the UNFCCC Secretariat to strengthen the link between statistics and policy, for example, by undertaking joint initiatives in the development of climate change statistics and indicators, encouraging joint capacity building efforts and trainings with other partners, and exploring ways to encourage national statistical offices to be more involved in the preparation of data submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat, for supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement.